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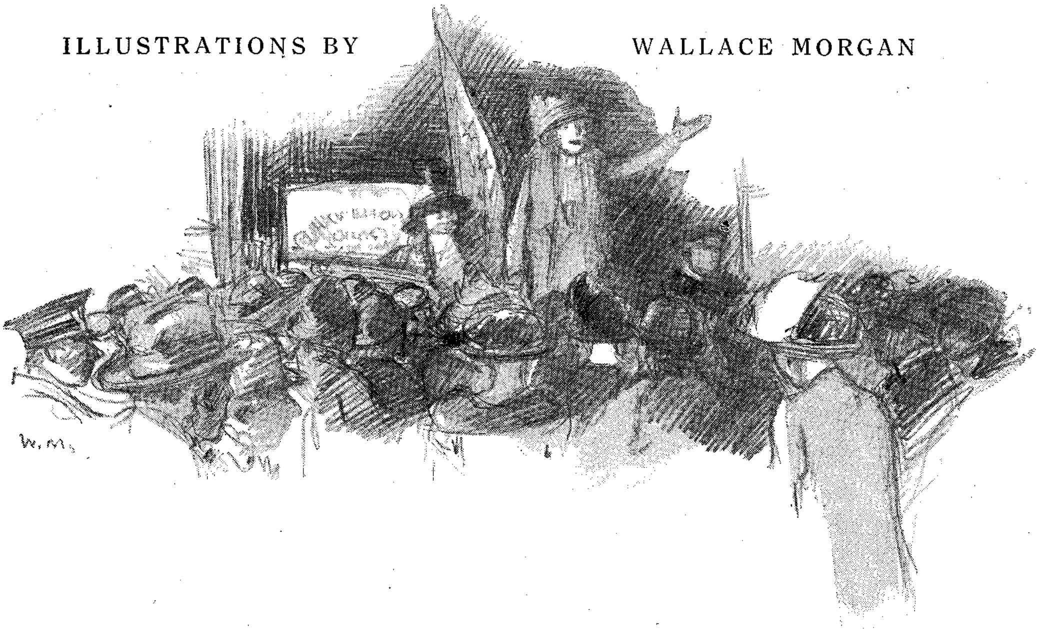
TWO MILLION WOMEN VOTE

BY

WALLACE IRWIN AND INEZ MILHOLLAND

ILLUSTRATIONS BY WALLACE MORGAN



A GREAT new political force was brought into existence with the last national election.

A group of States — Oregon, Kansas, Arizona, and probably Michigan — declared for Woman Suffrage. These States, added to the six that had already enfranchised women, brought the number of women entitled to vote up to the imposing total of three million. According to reliable statistics, sixty-six per cent of these women will actually exercise their suffrage rights.

At the next general election, therefore, two million American women will march to the polls as full-fledged citizens — a voting force sufficient, if acting in unison, to decide our national issues.

Delegates from all the Suffrage organizations of the country met in convention at Philadelphia on November 21 last. It was the first noteworthy political gathering of women in the United States — a historic event.

The great body of women represented by this convention embodies the promise of a new and untried spirit in the nation's politics — the spirit of devotion to the ideal of social service.

To report this meeting, to gather from it the full significance of this great, new force in our national life, McClure's Magazine *secured the services of one of the clearest and sanest observers among the writers of the day and of as efficient a young leader as the cause of women has in America. Here is their report:*

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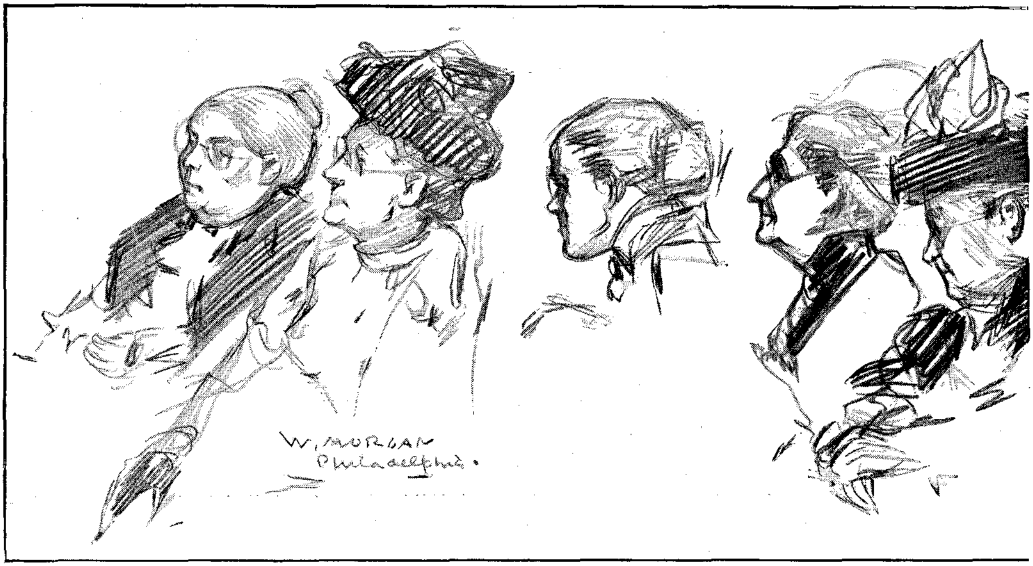
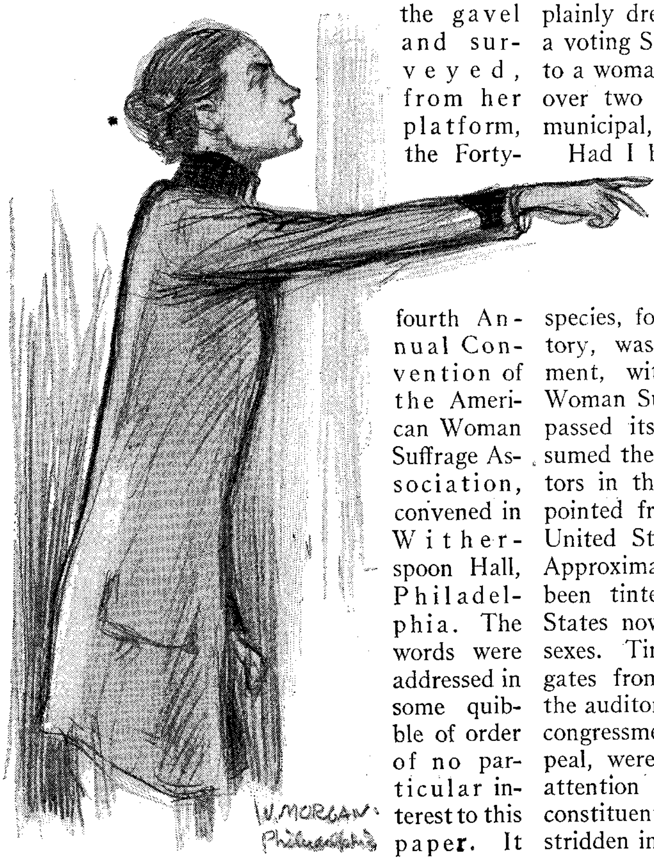
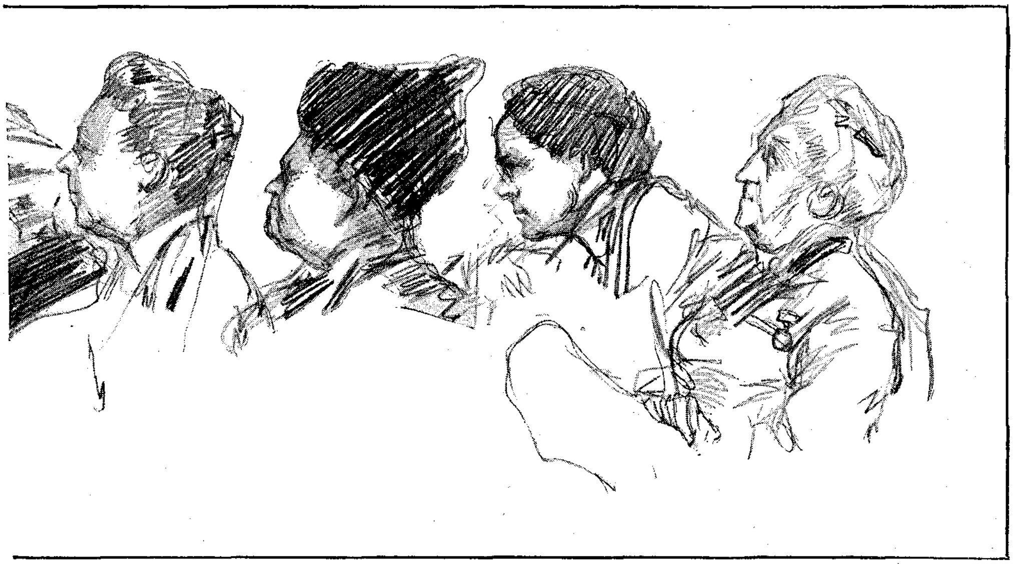


"MADAM CHAIRMAN!" A plainly dressed, sensible, elderly woman, who might have been your mother or mine, stood up and addressed the black, commanding brows of Dr. Anna H. Shaw, who held the gavel and surveyed, from her platform, the Forty-fourth Annual Convention of the American Woman Suffrage Association, convened in Witherspoon Hall, Philadelphia. The words were addressed in some quibble of order of no particular interest to this paper. It was the quaintness of the phrasing that struck me with its significance. A paradox—"Madam Chairman." Yet the title held within itself none of the comic-monstrous significance with which the funny papers have invested it for forty years. The plainly dressed woman was there representing a voting State, and she was putting a question to a woman who stands as the temporal head of over two million women, legalized voters in municipal, State, and national elections.



MISS LEONORA O'REILLY
". . . *Gaunt and Irish and pale with the burden of her destiny* . . ."

Had I been a woman-hating Schopenhauer or an English Premier,—and I am neither,—I could not have looked so blindly from my press seat in that hall as to fail to realize that the female of the species, for the first time in American history, was talking directly to the government, with an assurance of being heard. Woman Suffrage is here. In the West it has passed its argumentative stage and has assumed the dignity of fact. Shirt-waisted orators in the convention hall, during speeches, pointed frequently to a Suffrage map of the United States which hung from a balcony. Approximately one third of the map had been tinted a dark color, indicating the States now granting equal franchise to both sexes. Time and again, reporting delegates from non-Suffrage States arose in the auditorium to tell how their senators and congressmen, a few years ago deaf to appeal, were now giving more than half-hearted attention to the demands of future feminine constituents. So rapidly has the cause stridden in a year that those who were greeted merely as enthusiasts in the 1911 convention at Louisville awoke Philadelphia in 1912



with the voice of prophecy when they predicted that many of the thirteen Old Colony States, now stubbornly hostile to revolutionary thought of every kind, would grant the franchise to women in the next four years.

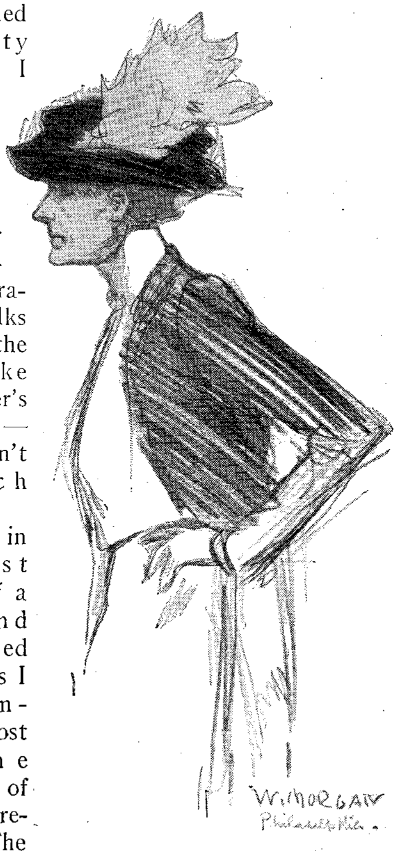
I went to Philadephia expecting to witness a week of jubilation; and I was not disappointed. Delegates of every size, age, and degree of style, from the New York representative in Russian sables to the Oklahoma alternate wearing something less pretentious,— from the earnest, handsome Bryn Mawr girl to the grim, old-fashioned Suffragist,— thronged the hotel corridors and streets leading to various meeting-places.

There was much handshaking and waving of yellow flags, with an occasional scattered soprano cheer to greet the arrival of some dominant leader, such as the strong, kind Lady of Hull-House. There were no brass bands, but there was much of the badge-showing and buttonhole gossip and general hocus-pocus of the average man's convention, be it Republican, Elks, or Bull Moose.

There was an ecstatic stampeding, too, around the shrine of popular idols. There were the "martyrs," Miss Alice Paul and Miss Lucy Burns, who were forcibly fed in English prisons; there was Miss Leonora O'Reilly, who brought the cause of labor to the convention; there was Mrs. O. H. P. Belmont of New York; there were several novelists, among them the authors of "Mary Carey" and "To Have and to Hold"; there were presidents of several women's colleges; there was a descendant of Henry Clay and a daughter of William Lloyd Garrison; there was Miss Belva Lockwood, who once ran for the Presidency; there was a lady policeman from Los Angeles; and there was a solitary male delegate from a New England State.

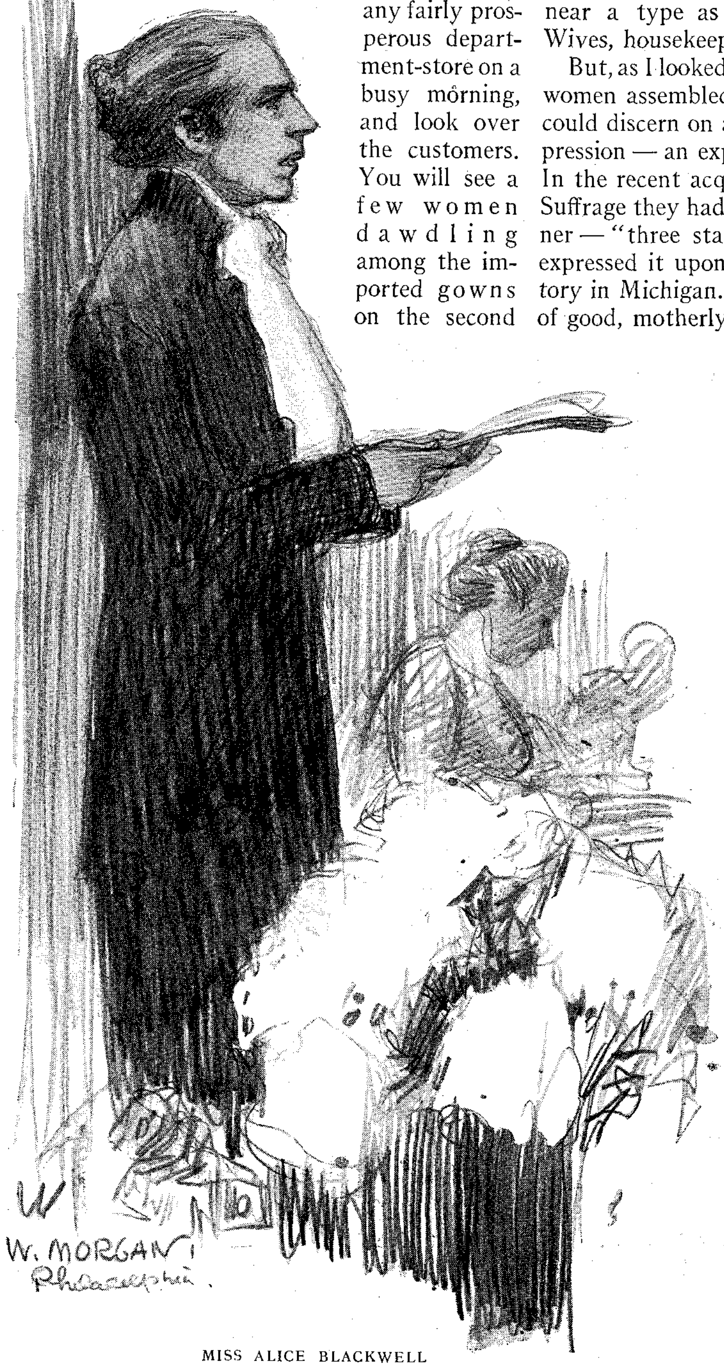
Flitting moth-like among the throng went the industrious cub reporter in search of the Typical Suffragette. He returned to his city editor, I fear, with either an empty pad or a page of lies. For the Typical Suffragette stalks among the myths like the farmer's camel — "there ain't no such animal."

Indeed, in my first survey of a thousand assembled Suffragists I was impressed most by the variety of types presented. The Suffragist of to-day



MISS JESSIE ASHLEY
. . . *Lawyer and Socialist, who fights for workingwomen* . . .

is not, as some newspapers would make us believe, a stately slave of fashion; neither is she a long-footed, short-haired termagant of Victorian memory. Both of the above types exist in about equally proportioned minority. But, to see the average Suffragist as she exists to-day, go to any fairly prosperous department-store on a busy morning, and look over the customers. You will see a few women dawdling among the imported gowns on the second floor; a few more will be in the book department, scanning essays on pragmatism through thick, near-sighted glasses; but the rank and file of the shoppers will be engaged in buying sensible cloth and sensible tinware at sensible prices. Give to this throng a Big Ideal,— and don't forget to include the working-girls behind the counter,— and I think you will have as near a type as I met with in Philadelphia. Wives, housekeepers, mothers, workers.

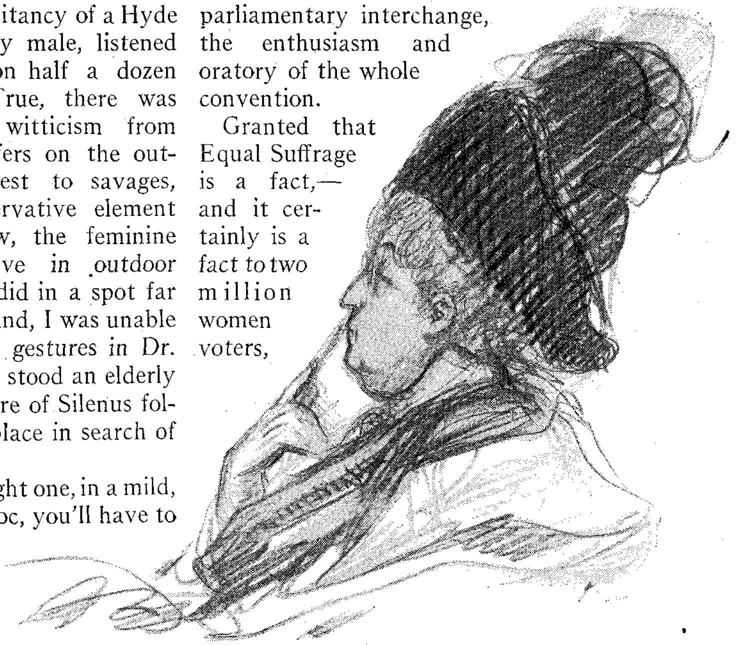


MISS ALICE BLACKWELL
. . . *Editor of the "Woman's Journal," and one of the keenest minds in the convention* . . .

But, as I looked over these thousand dissimilar women assembled at Philadelphia, I thought I could discern on all their faces one unifying expression — an expression of triumphant power. In the recent acquisition of four new States to Suffrage they had added four stars to their banner — "three stars and a comet," as a cynic expressed it upon hearing of the doubtful victory in Michigan. Triumph rang in the voices of good, motherly souls from Kansas and Oregon, telling how they had gained the right to vote from "the finest, most generous men in the world"; how "our menfolks in Oregon weren't going to let California put it over their womenfolks." Triumph came firmly from the experienced lips of Dr. Anna Shaw when she leaned from her rostrum to say: "Never has the future of our mighty movement for humanity been so plainly in sight. . . . This, indeed, is the woman's century, and the dawn of the real day of womanhood has just begun."

Enthusiasm breeds conviction, and I left that convention convinced of the nation-wide success of Equal Suffrage; but this conviction carried with it a Query which came to me strangely, like many another true word, from the lips of a drunkard. It happened in this wise:

The orators of the cause held forth picturesquely on the first day in Independence Square while the bell tolled noon from the fan-lighted cupola of the old brick hall. In contrast to the disgraceful militancy of a Hyde Park rally, the crowd, mostly male, listened respectfully to the speakers on half a dozen platforms under the trees. True, there was an occasional sotto voce witticism from the cloth-capped young loafers on the outskirts, who, being the nearest to savages, are naturally the most conservative element in our commonwealth. Now, the feminine voice is not always effective in outdoor speaking, and, standing as I did in a spot far removed from the speaker's stand, I was unable to catch much more than the gestures in Dr. Shaw's address. At my elbow stood an elderly intoxicated truckman, the figure of Silenus following Demos to the market-place in search of ribaldry.



HARRIET STANTON BLATCH

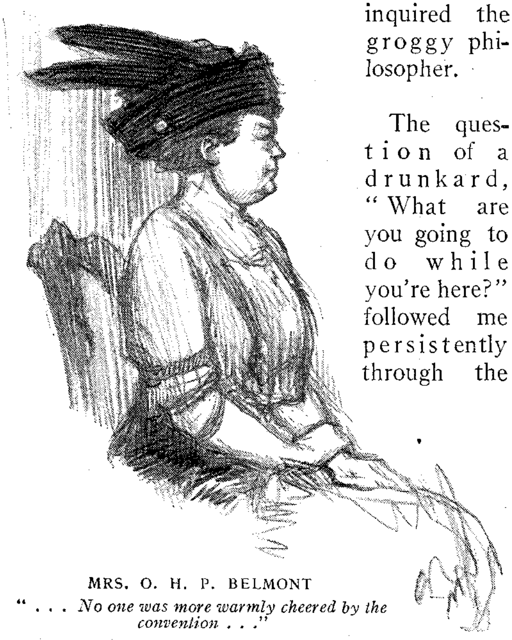
". . . There is no man orator alive who can hammer a truth home with more force . . ."

"Louder, Doc!" spoke the tight one, in a mild, conversational tone. "Say, Doc, you'll have to speak louder or you'll never git *my* vote."

A policeman shoved him along, and he wandered away to another speaker's stand. It was my bad luck to find myself standing next to the same tippler when I stopped to listen at platform 2. A Western woman, speaking forcefully of the infectious spread of suffrage, rounded out her discussion by saying:

"The woman with the ballot is in a position not to ask, but to command. The reactionaries may not like us, but they must put up with it. We are here to stay!"

(Applause.)



MRS. O. H. P. BELMONT

". . . No one was more warmly cheered by the convention . . ."

"But what y' goin' to do while you're here?" inquired the groggy philosopher.

The question of a drunkard, "What are you going to do while you're here?" followed me persistently through the parliamentary interchange, the enthusiasm and oratory of the whole convention.

Granted that Equal Suffrage is a fact,— and it certainly is a fact to two million women voters, — what does it stand for and, more important still, what will it stand for in the successful future now confronting it? Is there a Woman's Party, or are women to be part of many parties? And, if there *is* a Woman's Party, what are its issues? Moral ones? Political ones? In what manner will this new-born force give its influence to the nation and the world?

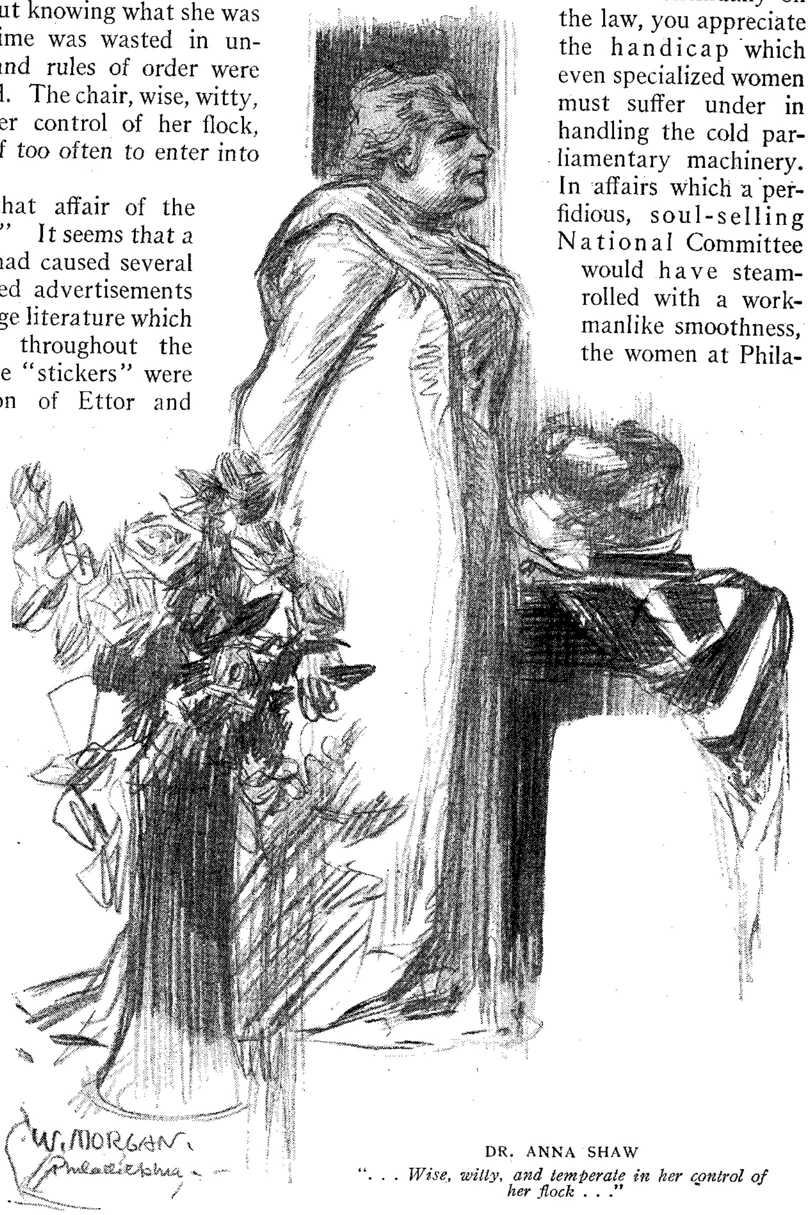
Woman an Unsophisticated Politician

I listened for an answer to that question through the varying discussions of five parliamentary days, and heard great argument about it. There is no doubt that woman in America is becoming more and more sophisticated on the subject of politics, but hers is still far short of the sophistication of the male politician. Miss M. Carey Thomas, president of Bryn Mawr and the College Woman's Suffrage League, has the legal mind and icy logic of an Elihu Root. Laura Clay, of Kentucky, seems to have inherited a degree of statesmanship from her distinguished ancestor. There is no man orator alive who can hammer a truth home with more force than can Mrs. Harriet Stanton Blatch. Yet the general temper of the Philadelphia gathering was — well, feminine. That is to say, there was a tendency to quibble on small matters and to rise splendidly to large ones.

Not that the meetings were unusually disorderly — heaven knows, they could not have been more so than the late lamented man-made

Republican affair at Chicago. But there was more organization in the disorder at Chicago than appeared in many technical tangles at Philadelphia. For instance, when Miss Harriet May Mills obtained the consent of five States in a matter pertaining to the unit rule debate, a Western delegate later arose and declared that she had given her name to Miss Mills' petition without knowing what she was signing. Valuable time was wasted in unnecessary quibble, and rules of order were overridden roughshod. The chair, wise, witty, and temperate in her control of her flock, yet permitted herself too often to enter into the debate.

Also, there was that affair of the mysterious "stickers." It seems that a nebulous somebody had caused several hundred little gummed advertisements to be pasted on suffrage literature which was sent broadcast throughout the United States. These "stickers" were pleas for the pardon of Ettor and Giovannetti, then under sentence. Mrs. Ida Husted Harper, in her debate on the amendment designed to keep officers of the Association out of politics, accused certain Socialist members of the board of having distributed the offending "stickers." The Socialist members, the members of the board, everybody half admitted, half denied implication in the affair. The chair finally questioned Mrs. Harper's authority, and an embarrassing situation was finally saved by Dr. Shaw's explanation that Mrs. Harper, being slightly deaf, had misunderstood somebody's remark. Worse messes than this occur in Congress every week and are settled in a more messy manner — but never in so feminine a manner.



DR. ANNA SHAW

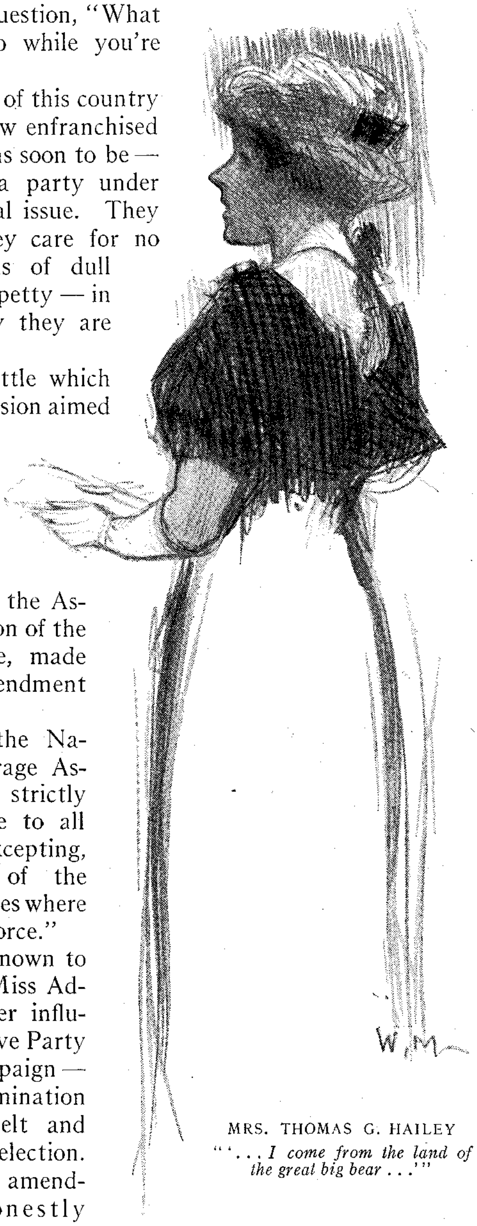
"... *Wise, witty, and temperate in her control of her flock* ..."

In fact, the convention at Philadelphia was nothing if not feminine. It lacked the tailor-made quality of a male convention. It also lacked the cheap shoddy. That its members were sometimes shaky on points of order was natural enough. When you consider that half the men sent to conventions are of legal training and the other half of a business education that touches continually on the law, you appreciate the handicap which even specialized women must suffer under in handling the cold parliamentary machinery. In affairs which a perfidious, soul-selling National Committee would have steamrolled with a workmanlike smoothness, the women at Philadelphia bungled; but they bungled in the right direction; for by the end of the week they did more toward making of themselves a progressive and modern organization than one of our masculine parties would have accomplished in a month of administrations. They buried an antiquated unit rule; they averted dissension; and they justified Jane Addams in her alliance with the Progressive party.

The Fight to Unseat Jane Addams

And touching on the vindication of Jane Addams brings me nearer, I think, to a solution of the question, "What are you going to do while you're here?"

The voting women of this country — the two million now enfranchised and the many millions soon to be — can only unite as a party under one issue — the moral issue. They have no other — they care for no other. In questions of dull procedure they are petty — in matters of humanity they are enormously big.



MRS. THOMAS G. HAILEY

"'. . . *I come from the land of the great big bear* . . .'"

Take this same battle which raged for a stormy session aimed at the unseating of Miss Addams from her present office and the curtailment of her possible ambitions for the presidency of the Association. No mention of the lady was, of course, made in the proposed amendment which read:

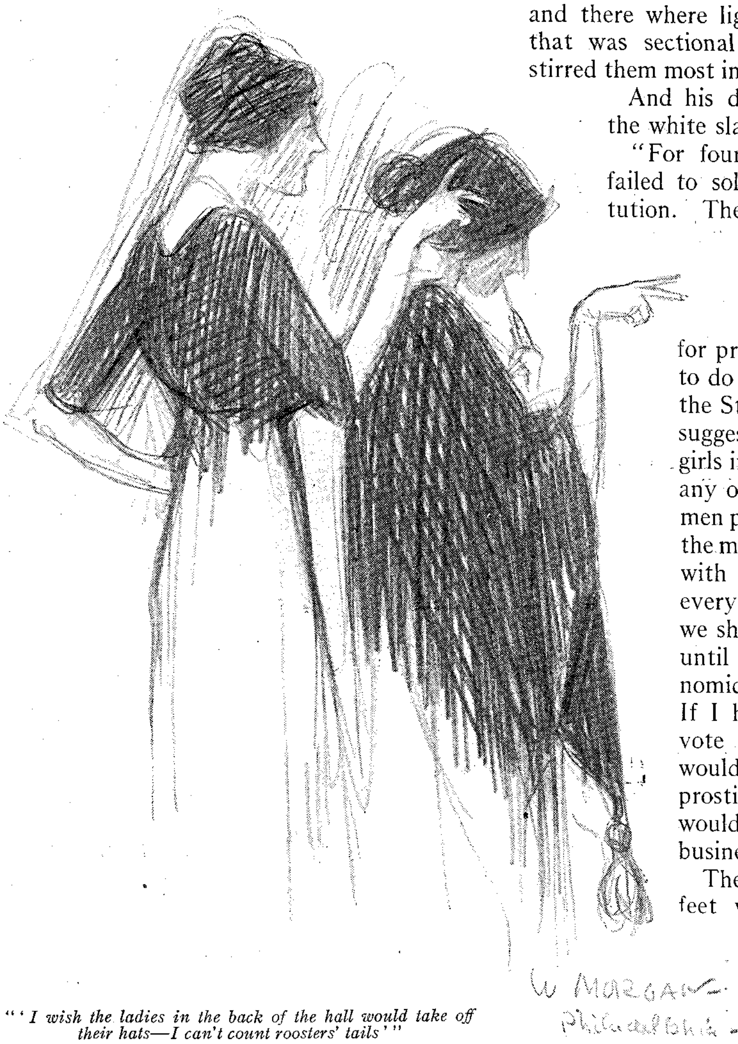
"The officers of the National Woman Suffrage Association maintain a strictly non-partizan attitude to all political parties, excepting, however, members of the Association from States where Equal Suffrage is in force."

Now, it was well known to her opponents that Miss Addams had thrown her influence to the Progressive Party during the recent campaign — had seconded the nomination of Theodore Roosevelt and worked toward his election. The framers of the amendment were, I honestly think, entirely influenced by fear of the party bugaboo in Suffrage; but Miss Addams was chosen to be, in vulgar parlance, the "goat." I myself can readily see why she jeopardized her standing among Suffragists to make common cause with the Progressives. Being the noblest woman of them all, she had made her life work a fight for the moral issue, and when there arose in her State a party which had made that issue predominant in its platform, she was feminist enough to give her heart to the cause. In becoming a Progressive she became, I might say, a super-Suffragist. The move was pretty good strategy, too, because the Roosevelt forces bade fair to win in Illinois, and with their victory another State would have been added to Suffrage.

However, the debate raged for and against in the auditorium of Witherspoon Hall. There is much to be said in justice to the opponents of party affiliation by women in non-enfranchised States. Women who can't vote want the vote and nothing else. Given the power of ballot, let them line up on whatever side they please, but let them not weaken the cause by scattering their forces among various parties. Heat lightning flashed among the speakers. The specter of anarchy was invoked by one, and the famous Ettor-Giovannetti "sticker" was waved aloft. Mrs. Harper attributed the slowness of Kansas in gaining Suffrage to their ancient affiliation with Populism. Mrs. Blatch replied that it was nonsense for vote-desirous women *not* to slip in in the wake of great political parties.

And then Miss Addams spoke. I have never seen a saint, yet there has never been more saintliness than in the face of this big, gentle woman whose eyes are sad with looking on human misery in the desire to save. She spoke with perfect candor and no flourishes.

"When I stood on a Progressive platform," she said, "I had better views on Suffrage than ever before in my life." She conferred with men of all political creeds in her work at Hull-House, she said. She had conferred that morning with a member of the Taft Cabinet in a matter of philanthropy, and she had not felt that either of their political faiths had been biased thereby. At any rate, she



"'I wish the ladies in the back of the hall would take off their hats—I can't count roosters' tails'"

was no seeker of high office in Suffrage, as her life work was among the poor and she had small time for other duties. She was sure that work would not make her less a sympathizer with woman's struggle, nor would her efficiency be curtailed by attacking poverty and vice, under whatever party she chose.

Before the voting which followed, I had occasion to hear public opinion privately expressed. Time and again I heard women protest against censuring a member who had done "so much good." Subsequently the amendment was lost and Jane Addams won. She had raised the moral issue.

How One Man Stirred the Convention

Indeed, in reviewing those few days, I recall how the convention never failed to rise to the moral issue, and to very little else — save here and there where lightning flashed in a storm that was sectional but not factional. Who stirred them most in speech? A man.

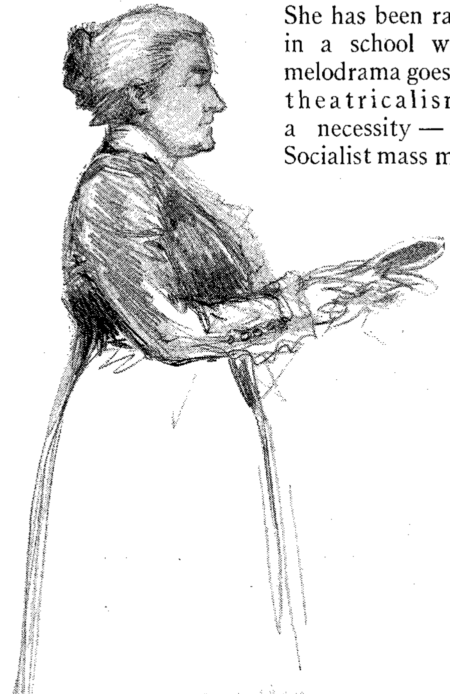
And his discourse was an attack on the white slave traffic:

"For four thousand years we have failed to solve the question of prostitution. The furthest we have got is the frank acknowledgment that prostitution is a business proposition and that this business is conducted for profit. What do we propose to do about it? Shall we make the State a partner? It has been suggested that we make all the girls in the business register. Has any one proposed to regulate the men patrons of the girls and make the men register? . . . In dealing with the problem we are doing everything for the men; . . . and we shall never solve the problem until woman has become the economic and political equal of man. If I had the power to give the vote to women, the first I would give it to would be the prostitute, because I think she would vote against this terrible business."

The convention came to its feet with a salvo that rivaled the stop-watch demonstrations of Chicago and Baltimore. In raising the moral issue the speaker had struck the mother-pulse of women and attacked a problem they were all there to solve.

The Girl Striker with the Pleasant Voice

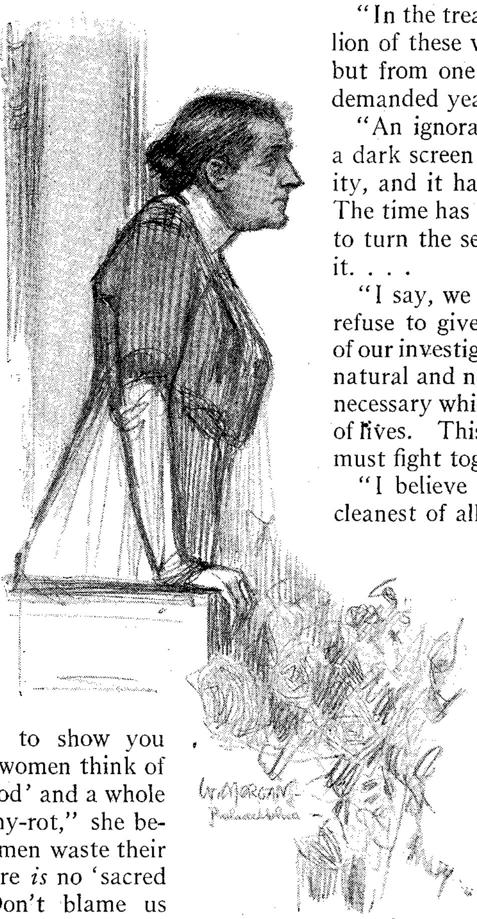
Again, from the center of a fast thickening debate on technical points arose to the platform a girl who was gaunt and Irish and pale with the burden of her destiny. Her name is Leonora O'Reilly. She is a factory worker who has protested against the evil conditions of her trade, led strikes, and suffered imprisonment for her activity in agitation. When she speaks, she "puts it over" with a voice which — in pleasant contrast to the average American feminine voice, which is too full of meaningless squeaks and tremolos to be effective in oratory — is rich and sympathetic and stirring. You who have been nurtured on the finer food of Lyceum lectures would think her a trifle melodramatic.



MISS M. CAREY THOMAS
". . . *She has the legal mind and icy logic of an Elihu Root* . . ."

She has been raised in a school where melodrama goes and theatricalism is a necessity — the Socialist mass meeting. Yet, as she stood on the rostrum of Witherspoon Hall, eccentrically clad, one long finger pointing to her auditors, she held them all and moved them to response. For she spoke on a moral issue.

"I should like to show you what the workingwomen think of 'sacred motherhood' and a whole lot of other tommy-rot," she began. "While women waste their lives in mills there *is* no 'sacred motherhood.' Don't blame us when we go out on strike. If we don't strike we get struck — and when we *do* strike we get clubbed. . . . We want the college women to come to our meetings; but, for heaven's sake, don't come to talk. Let *us* do the talking. We have felt the lash, and it is our right to cry out at the sting of it."



MISS JANE ADDAMS
. . . *Sad with looking on human misery* . . .

The Greatest Issue of the Convention

The most patient man in Congress, the Hon. Oscar Underwood, devoted something like a year to investigating the tariff — a political question. Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt has toured the world and given two years of her time to investigating the social evil — a moral question. She spoke at a big meeting held at the Philadelphia Metropolitan Opera House, where nine thousand people came and five thousand got in.

"The heathen East," she said, "sells, and the Christian West buys. . . . In truth, to-day, to appease a bestiality which is far out of keeping with the twentieth century, hundreds of thousands of maidens are appraised for a certain death.

"In the treaty ports of the East at least a million of these women are in service. The life is but from one to ten years, and thousands are demanded yearly to supply the want. . . .

"An ignorant world, for centuries, has kept a dark screen before the question of sex morality, and it has worked its ravages unmolested. The time has come to tear down this screen and to turn the search-light of common sense upon it. . . .

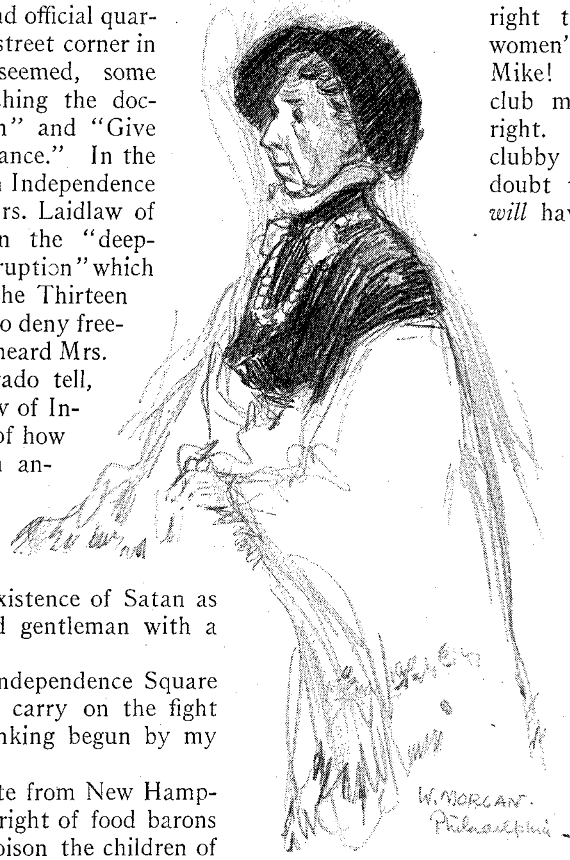
"I say, we are partners to this vice when we refuse to give it our attention and the benefit of our investigation. . . . I refuse to believe it is natural and necessary. Nothing is natural and necessary which requires the sacrifice of millions of lives. This evil is one which men and women must fight together with ballots.

"I believe the skirts of our country are the cleanest of all the nations. And I can see our reformers of the future going down into the pestilential mire and wading onward to succor those unfortunate brothers and sisters of ours."

Baroness Bertha von Suttner touched, woman fashion, the question of war when she attacked it rather as a moral than a diplomatic question. Again, in the morning session of that same day, Jane Addams pointed plainly to our ethical duty to immigrants whom, she has seen, "arriving in this country full of eagerness and avidity for life, having their loyalty grabbed by the wrong agents and their sense of duty perverted by the ward boss and the division leader. The self-seeking politician, who met all their wants and won their gratitude, typified the country for them. They could not go to the government for aid, because it was not ready to give it. . . . Consequently their sense of democracy was perverted and their gratitude turned in the wrong channels."

To quote from every speech where public and domestic morality was touched upon would be to give a stenographic account of the convention, minus a few executive quibbles and official quarrels. From every street corner in Philadelphia, it seemed, some woman was preaching the doctrines, "Be Clean" and "Give our Children a Chance." In the open-air meeting in Independence Square I heard Mrs. Laidlaw of New York arraign the "deep-seated political corruption" which still conspired in the Thirteen Original Colonies to deny freedom to women. I heard Mrs. Bjorkman of Colorado tell, in the very shadow of Independence Hall, of how her first American ancestor "No Devil" Maule, suffered Salem persecution because he persistently denied the existence of Satan as a dark-browed old gentleman with a spiked tail.

"And here in Independence Square I feel inspired to carry on the fight against wrong thinking begun by my ancestor."



MISS BELVA LOCKWOOD, LL.D.
". . . *She once ran for the Presidency* . . ."

I heard a delegate from New Hampshire question the right of food barons of one State to poison the children of another by the law-protected sale of adulterated products. But I heard no discussions of the necessity of fortifying the Panama Canal, of conserving coal in Alaska, of humiliating Schedule K. The talk was always of the child, the boy and girl at school, the anemic worker in the mill, the white slave, the mutual responsibility of men and women.

The figure of Liberty, apron-clad, stood shaking a broom at Uncle Sam and demanding good housekeeping.

The safe, sane, and conservative humorist of the sort who still finds merit in the mother-in-law joke would have gone to the Philadelphia convention for a perfectly bully time, since the right to josh woman in politics is the prerogative of the stand-pat humorist. And must I confess an occasional atavistic longing to smile at some of the less important proceedings in Witherspoon Hall? There is a mythical person named Feminine Foibles, who exists only in the mind of the Woman's Page Editor; but it must be admitted that woman has a way in public meetings which can not be covered by the code of Solon. I heard an unsympathetic male in the rear of the hall say, during the debate over Mrs. Park's right to sit with the college women's delegation: "Love o' Mike! This is like a woman's club meeting." And he was right. It *did* have a woman's-clubby aspect, and I have no doubt that these conventions *will* have, even unto the year 1940, when the Suffragists are rich and strong enough to hire the Auditorium at Chicago and usher in their delegates with brass bands and all the steam-rolling paraphernalia of their brothers. I say this not in disparagement. Woman's ways are not man's ways; and in their dissimilarity lies the nation's hope for the feminist influence in our politics.

The humorous aspect of a great movement may be superficial, but it is no less humorous for that. For instance, during an evening session the ushers passed through the audience to take up a collection for the cause. An orator was speaking at the time, but her words were drowned out by a purely feminine racket — the sound of a thousand purse-clasps snapping right and left with the staccato tattoo of hail falling on a tin roof.

When the standing vote on the non-partizan amendment was being counted, the Chair was heard to say: "I wish the ladies in the back of the hall would either take off their hats or stop chatting with their heads so close together. I can't count roosters' tails." The following two-line dialogue between the chair and a delegate would sound strange in the report of a Republican convention:

The Chair. Do you mean to say the rule should apply to your State only?

The Delegate. My dear! I didn't say any such thing.

House-Cleaners of the Nation

A wild-eyed fanatic of a Slavic type accosted a motherly person who stood at a street corner distributing Suffragist hand-bills. The alien, looking for argument, took one of the bills, and when he came to a line which spoke in complimentary terms of the Stars and Stripes, he cast the paper to the ground with a snarl of imported rage.

"What are you doing with that hand-bill?" inquired the stout Suffragist severely.

"I like not vat it say about American flag!" grunted the man.

"Isn't it a perfectly good flag?" asked the lady, in an honest Oregon accent.

"It iss a mockery!" thundered the fanatic.

"It's the finest, squarest flag that ever floated over a free people," she retorted.

"Bah! Ven vill you learn to get some broadness into your mind?" The man gesticulated close to her face with expressive, dingy fingers.

"When you learn to wash your hands," replied this mother of men.

When you learn to wash your hands! That's the call which these two million newly enfranchised souls are bringing to us. If men are the stronger sex, women are surely the cleaner sex, and that part of our national politics which does actually advance is concerned, more than with anything else, with cleanliness. I doubt much if the woman mind will ever add much to the man mind in matters of diplomacy or statescraft. That she has enormous powers of organization is plainly shown in the victory of those two million ballots in a country which, a century ago, would not admit girls to the public schools. But she seems capable of organizing and working together only under the stimulus of a great ideal, and that ideal is morality, which is the home. "Woman's place is in the home" to-day as much as yesterday. But she is bringing the home to the place where it belongs — into contact with the nation.

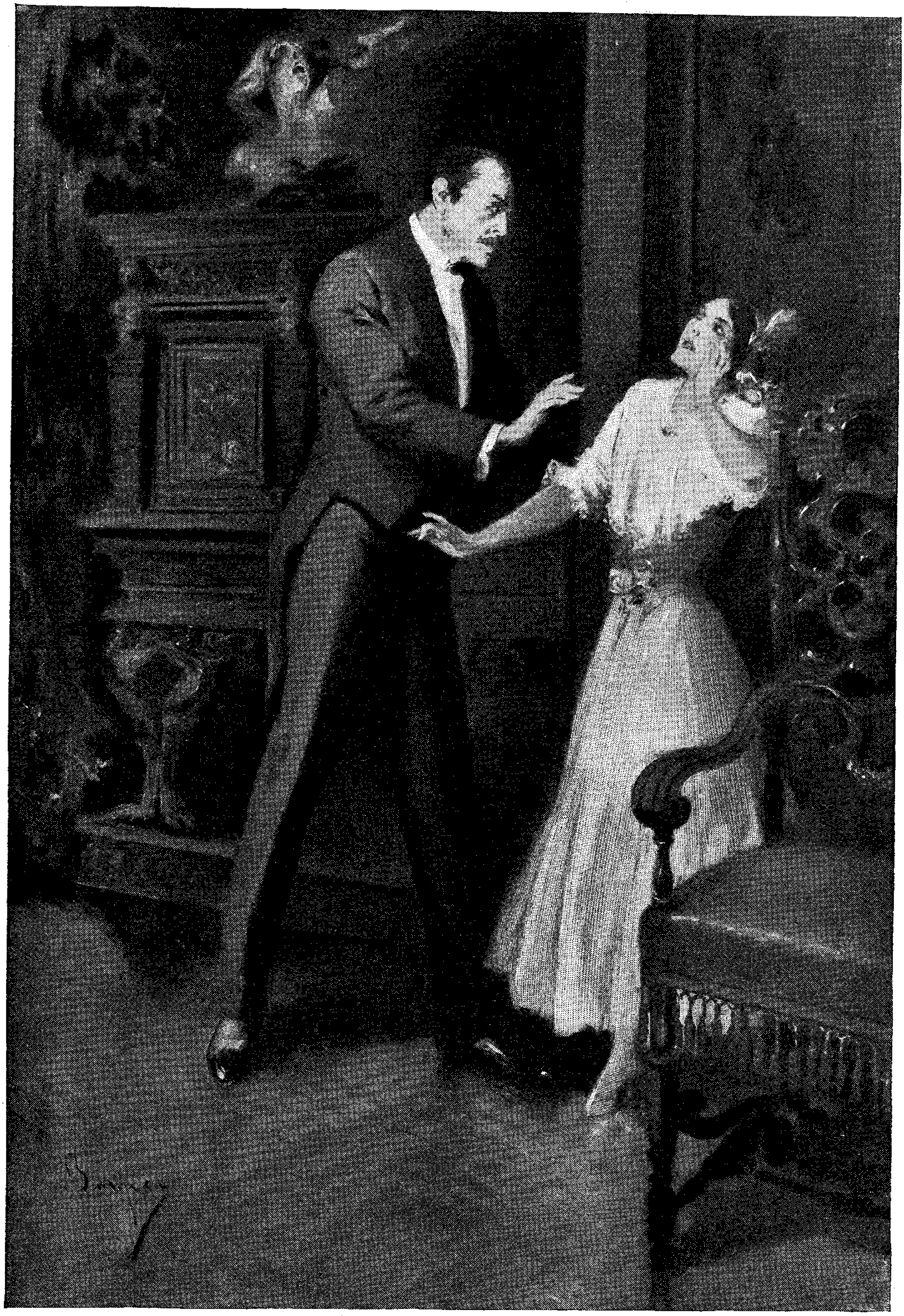
What, then, do those two million votes stand for? Will they serve as a nucleus of a great Woman Suffrage Party? No — not as we understand parties to-day.

Thirty years from now — perhaps ten — the National American Woman Suffrage Association will be no more, because every woman in this country will have a vote and there will be no ballot to fight for. The feminine voters will stand, as they do to-day in California and Colorado, under various party platforms. Will these party divisions be permanent? No. Woman's allegiance to party will depend largely on that party's fidelity to moral and humane causes. And when one such cause rises predominant in a political campaign, under that issue will the Woman's Party form again and set its standard for victory or defeat.

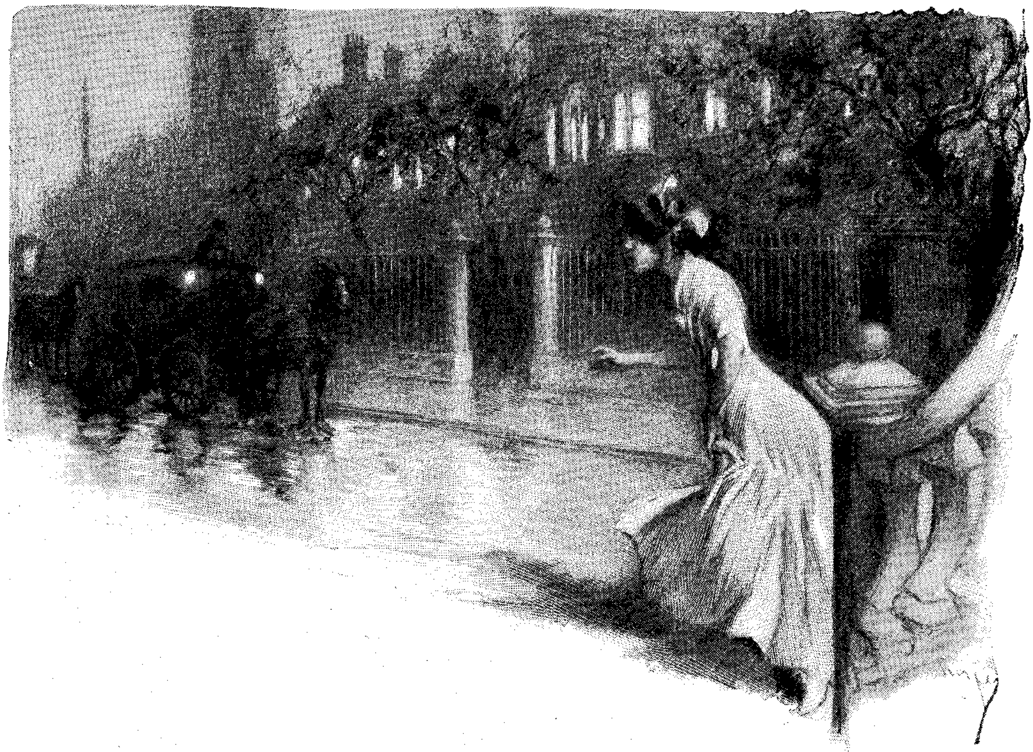
And what can be a more useful citizenship than this: To compel decency in party management; to grant the poor the right of beauty in removing unsightly buildings and hideous signs from our river-fronts and woodlands; to give to little children the real justice of light, food, and play; to make war unnecessary; to make our cities fit to live in and our streets safe for the young; to dignify motherhood by protection from the slavery of the mills; to increase the standard of living and reduce its cost; and to supplant by enlightened industry the dull torpor of our submerged mass?

Am I narrowing woman's franchise when I say that her issue will always be a moral rather than a political one?

A department by Inez Milholland, directed particularly to the interests of women, will be begun in the February McClure's.



"'THAT'S NOT THE WAY. FOR GOD'S SAKE, HURRY! IT'S A QUESTION OF MOMENTS, NOW!'"



MY LITTLE SISTER

BY

ELIZABETH ROBINS

AUTHOR OF "COME AND FIND ME," ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY WILLIAM BERGER

The first part of "My Little Sister" was published in the December McCLURE'S

PART II

"*YOU are in one of the most terrible houses in Europe!*"

Minutes seemed to go by. Vague hints from servants, things I had read in the papers — and still I sat there, not moving by so much as a hair.

He was looking at me now and telling me to "keep cool." And then: "I suppose you know there *are* such places." He interrupted himself to say: "Remember! A careless look or move would mean — well, it would mean ruin. *Now* do you understand?"

Beyond a doubt, I did. If I moved or cried for help, he would kill me before my aunt could get back — before I could cross the room. Though why he should wish to kill me I could form no idea.

"You must have time to recover," he said, in that muted, uneven voice. "I will shield you while you pull yourself together." He had bent forward till his shoulders shut out my view of the group at the other end of the room.

I shrank into my cushions. But: "I have myself in hand now," I said. For I knew you must never let the insane know you are afraid.

Betty's laughter sounded far away.

"Take your time," he said. "They're enjoying themselves. They haven't even rung for the cognac and liqueurs yet." They would make Bettina and me drink a liqueur, he said. Or, if they failed in that, they'd say, "A thimbleful of coffee, then." And our coffee would be "doctored."

"But we've *had* coffee!" I said, in a new access of terror — was it drugged coffee that made me feel so lamed?

"That was all right," he said. "That was to steady *us*."

He did not look as if he needed steadying. What if he were not mad?

"Be careful," he said again. "Remember, I am running a ghastly risk in telling you. But you are facing a ghastly certainty if I don't."

I sat in that stillness of stark terror — staring at him.

And, as I stared, I found myself clinging to the thought that had been horror's height a little while before. "Pray God he's mad," I kept saying inwardly.

If I could keep my head, he said, I had no cause to be so frightened. It was some little time before he could give me up without rousing suspicion.

"Before you give me up!" I imagined the Grey Hawk swooping to snatch me.

"Before I help you to get out of this," he explained. "And, when I do, you will perhaps remember it is at a sacrifice. Greater than I supposed I could feel."

I moved at that — but like a sleep-walker on the edge of waking.

I asked him, in a whisper, what we were to do. I meant Betty and me. But he said: "When she begins to play or to sing, you are to get up, quite quietly — *can* you?"

I made a sign for yes.

"No haste. You must do it languidly — go out of the room."

"But my ——" (I suppressed "my aunt" with an inward twist of questioning anguish) "— shall I not be asked why and where I am going?"

He said, no. Because he would make the others a sign. He thought Bettina would take no notice of my going. "But, if she does, I'll tell her you wanted her to go on singing. I shall seem to be coming after you. But I'll stop to explain that we've had an argument about one of the pictures in the hall." He told me what I was to do.

"If, after all, they were to prevent me, what then?"

"They won't; they will leave you to me." He said it with a look that stopped the heart.

I implored him to let me go out alone.

He fixed his unhappy eyes on mine. "You would never be allowed out of this room alone."

"I could say I must post a letter."

"They would ring for a servant."

I measured the long room. "If once I got as far as the door, I could run."

"As far as the front door, perhaps. You would find it locked. No servant would open it for you."

"Will they for you?"

"I can do it for you," he said under his breath, and he stood up.

I thought he meant I was to make trial then of that terrible passage to the door. But was it not better to be where Betty was, whatever came — Betty and I together — than Betty alone with those devouring-eyed men, and I with a maniac out in the hall?

"I can not leave my sister!" I said.

He stood in front of me, masking me from the others. "Haven't I made you understand? If you don't leave the room with me, *she* will leave it with Whitby-Dawson."

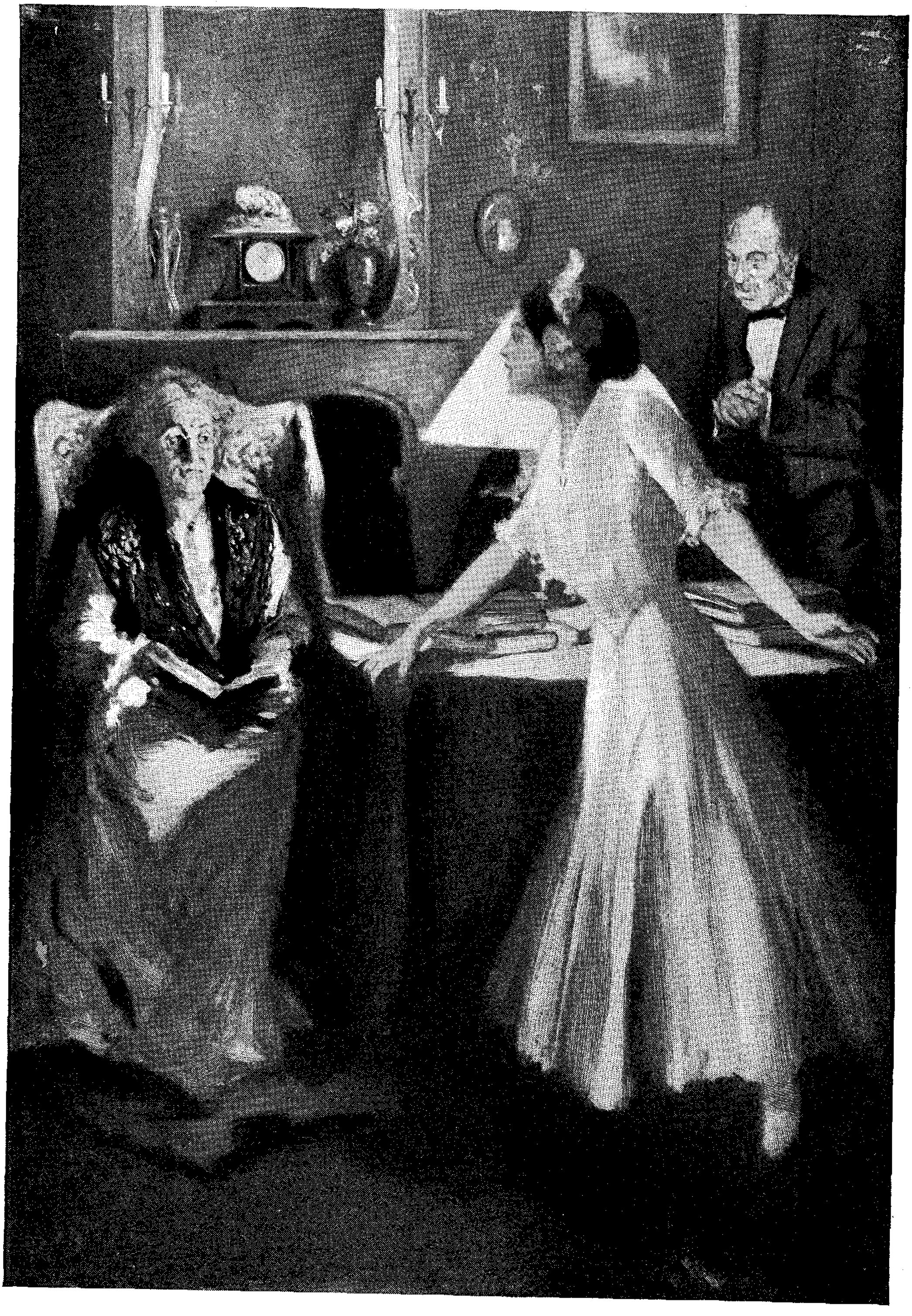
"No! No!"

He hushed me. "She won't know why — but she'll do it. And she won't come back again." He pulled a great cushion up, to hide my face. And then he turned and made a feint of getting an illustrated paper off the table. He kept his eye on the others. There was some little commotion, during which Betty had risen. She left the sofa and sat on the piano-stool. She was laughing excitedly.

The man came back to me with the illustrated paper. He sat down closer to me, and held the paper open for a shield. But he held it strangely, with his arm across the picture. The reading part was in French. I had to crane to see over the top — Betty, twisting round on the piano-stool, and touching the keys in a provoking way; the two men teasing her to sing.

I have lived over every instant of that hour until the smallest detail is a stain indelible upon my mind. I have no trouble in remembering. My trouble is to be able to forget.

I hear again that muted voice behind the paper saying, "But for the collie-dog story, I wouldn't have dared to risk this. Everything depends on your nerve." And then he looked at me curiously and wanted to know if I had not heard there were such places — "I won't say



"'YOU MUST COME AND HELP ME TO GET BETTINA! OH, GOD, LET US BE QUICK!'"

like this. This is a masterpiece of devilry. And masterpieces are never plentiful."

He waited for me to say something. If I had known what, I could not have said it. I tried hard to speak. But I could only look dumbly in his face. And I saw there was no madness in the unhappy eyes.

"You must have heard or read of places — where men and women meet," he insisted.

Then, with an immense effort, I managed to say that I didn't seem able to think. I had been imagining other people insane. But perhaps it was I . . .

I stared over the top of the French paper, that he was both holding up and hiding from me. I thought to myself, "My mind is going." I must have said as much, for he answered quickly: "Not a bit of it. You've had a shock; that's all."

I did not realize it at the time, but, looking back, I seem to see the man's growing horror of my horror — and his fear I should betray him.

"I am sorry I told you," he said.

What was it he had told me? I asked him to help me to understand.

"You make it hard. That isn't fair," he said. "You give me a sense of doing violence. You implicate me, in spite of the Quixotic resolve I made when you begged me not to go. You make me, after all, an instrument of initiation."

Yes, he complained. Yet, looking back from the bleak height of later knowledge, I think he betrayed some relish of the moment. Heaven forgive me if I do him wrong. But he was not, I think, losing all that he had come for, or he would have shortened my agony. True, he was sacrificing what few of his sort would sacrifice. And he was running the gravest personal risk. For at some point I asked about that. "If she knew what you had told me, what would she do?"

"Call in her bullies to beat me to a jelly."

He was more and more unwilling to seem a mere adjunct of the baseness he unveiled. I was not to judge too harshly. "This situation"— he nodded toward Bettina, the old man and the young one — "all this, far more crudely managed, is a commonplace in the world. In every capital of every nation on the earth. And it has always been so."

He saw I did not believe him. He seemed to imagine that, while I was being torn on that rack where he had stretched me, I could think of other things. I cried to him under my breath not to torture me any more — "help me quickly to get help!"

He said I must trust him. Everything depended on choosing the right moment. "If you went out now, with that face, you'd pull the house about our ears."

He was doing all he could to calm and steady me, he said. And certainly he tried to make me feel that what to me was like a maniac's nightmare, an abysmal horror beggaring language and crucifying thought, was all a commonplace to men and women of the world. "Human nature" — "human nature," like the tolling of a muffled bell. Bishops and old ladies imagined you could alter these things. "Take India. I've been there. I knew an official who'd had charge of the *chaklas*. You don't know what *chaklas* are? Your father knew. If you'd gone riding round any one of the cantonments you'd have seen. Little groups of tents. A hospital not far off. Women in the tents. Out there it's no secret."

Even governments, he said, had to recognize human nature, and shape their policies accordingly.

"I can do it now!" I cried under my breath, and I stood up.

He shot out a hand and pulled me back. "Not while the Grey Hawk is hovering outside! And your lips are livid." A good thing, he said, that I had still a few minutes. "You have your sister to thank. She is a success. She piles up anticipation. The value of that is the stock in trade of people like our hostess. At a time when her profession is a hundred per cent more dangerous than it's ever been since the world began, she perfects it. Makes it pay in proportion to its danger." Couldn't I trust him to know? After a second: "How did she get hold of you?" I knew no more than the dead. "Through some one very well informed." He probed and questioned. I could only shake my head. But my tortured mind fluttered spasmodically from figure to figure in our little world, and felt each one's recoil from my mere unspoken thought. Until — *the little dressmaker!* Her questions; her pains to establish the fact of our isolation, of our poverty; her special interest in our aunt. "You haf a photografie — *hein?*" And then the picture's vanishing. Had it come to this house to serve as model? The Tartar liked the "new coiffure."

Two servants came in. One carried a great silver tray.

"Oh, leave that a bit!" The Tartar, over the back of the sofa, waved the footmen off.

They came toward us, and were told: "Put it there on the table." The man beside me made a show of welcoming it. He dropped the illustrated paper in my lap. "Bend down. Bend down low," he whispered.

I bent over the swimming page.

"What will you have?" he called out to me, as the footmen were leaving the room.

I tried to answer. No sound.

"Oh, you prefer *crême de menthe,* do you?" he said, quite loud. "Yes, there's *crême de menthe.*" He filled a glass and brought it to me. "Cognac," he whispered. "It will steady you."

I put my shaking lips to the glass; I did not drink.

"Ah, you are afraid," he said. And he looked at me with his unhappy eyes.

My hand was shaking. Some of the stuff spilt out on my new dress.

"Give it to me," he said, and he drank it off — "just to show" me.

I was conscious that Betty was singing — and that the door had opened.

The Grey Hawk stood there with, as I thought at first, a thick-set boy dressed in a man's evening clothes. As she dismissed him and shut the door, I saw he was a hunchback.

The Colonel left the piano and met my aunt. He was laughing. They stood and talked.

"Bend down. Bend low," the voice said in my ear.

The Colonel's croaking laugh came nearer.

The man at my side called out: "Look here, Colonel. No poaching on my preserves. We are deep in a discussion about art. You're not to interrupt."

"Oh, art, is it?" The old man had come behind our sofa, and was leaning down between us. I smelt a foul breath. With a sense of choking, I lifted my head. The Colonel's watery eyes went from me to the strange, ugly picture. I did not understand it. I do not think I should have been conscious of having looked at it, but for the expression on the Colonel's face.

Bettina finished her song. They all clapped. In the buzz, Bettina raised her voice. She couldn't dance and sing as well as accompany herself, she said.

"In what time is it?" the grey woman asked. She took Bettina's place at the piano.

Still Bettina hesitated, while the Tartar urged.

"Oh, I don't mind, if you *like* such babyish songs."

"Of course we do." The Colonel went back to them.

Bettina said pertly: "I should think you'd be ashamed." She stood beside the grey woman and hummed the old tune. She helped by striking a few notes.

"Now!" the grey woman said to Betty.

The word was echoed in my ear.

"Now?" I repeated.

"But first" — he caught my hand. "Bite your lip a little."

Betty stood poised, holding her green skirt with both hands, like a child about to curtsy. I stood up. All the room was dancing with my little sister. I got to the door.

"Where are you going ——"

Betty sang. But she was too amused and excited to notice me.

My companion was bending over the Grey Hawk. She looked round at him, surprised, mocking.

Some power came to help me over the threshold. A footman started up out of the floor and stood before me. "Where are you going?" he echoed Betty.

"I am waiting for — one of the gentlemen," I said, and I leaned against a chair. If Betty's song stopped, I should know we had failed.

I held my breath as I leaned over and took my last look into the room. My friend was leaving the grey woman. She played on. Bettina was dancing, a hand on her hip, the other twirling moustachios — playing the gallant. Such a baby she looked!

And I had done her hair like that ——

"What is your fortune, my pretty maid?"

The man had come out and softly shut the door. He gave the footman a strange look and passed him something. "It's all right," he said.

The footman looked in his hand and stared. "*Mais, merci — merci, monsieur.*" He vanished.

I went towards the stairs.

"*That's* not the way," the voice said harshly.

"Sha'n't I get a cloak?"

"For God's sake, no! It's a question of moments, now." He was undoing the door. "Run for your life. First to the left — a cab-rank."

I fled out of the house.

XII

I STOOD ringing. I thundered at the knocker. I beat the door with my fist. An old man opened at last.

"Mrs. Caterham! Where is she?"

The old man tried to keep me out. But he was gentle and frail. I forced my way past. I called, and ran along a passage, trying doors that opened into the darkness.

At last! — a room where a woman sat alone — reading by a shaded light.

"Who are you?" I cried out. She laid her book in her lap. "Are *you* Mrs. Caterham! Then come — come quickly! I'll tell you on the way."

The old woman lifted the folds of her double chin and looked at me through spectacles.

"You must come and help me to get Bettina!" I broke into distracted sobbing on the name. "Bettina! Bettina!" I seized my aunt's hand and tried to draw her out of her chair.

But I was full of trembling. She sat there, massive, calm, with a power of inert resistance that made me feel I could as easily lift her house out of the Square by its knocker as move the woman planted there in her chair.

Neither haste nor perturbation in the voice that asked me: "What has happened?"

"*Not yet!*" I cried out. "Nothing has happened yet! But we must be quick. Oh, God, let us be quick!"

The butler had followed me in, and was asking something. "Yes," said the quiet voice; "pay the cabman."

"No!" I shrieked. "Keep him! I must go back, instantly." . . . And through my own strange-sounding voice hers reached me:

"You must see that you are quite unintelligible. Sit down and collect yourself."

"Sit down! Isn't it enough that *one* woman sits still, while — while ——"

She was putting questions.

I heard a reproach that seemed to fill the house: "You never came to meet us."

And, while the charge was ringing, I felt with anguish the injustice of it. How could one have expected this woman to come!

But she should be moved and stirred at last!

"I sent my maid," she was defending herself — "only a minute or two late."

"The other woman was not late!"

"Who?"

I begged the butler to get a cloak for Mrs. Caterham. She was saying that Bettina and I should have waited — and again that I must calm myself and tell her ——

"Some one pretended to be you!" I hurled it at her. "She took us to a house — a place where they do worse than murder. I escaped. Betty is there now." I told her all I could pack into a few sentences.

"It isn't possible," my aunt said. "This is England."

"*Come and see!* Betty ——"

But they only thought me mad. They tortured me with questions.

I caught her by the arm. "God won't forgive you if you wait an instant more!"

Oh, but she was old and unbelieving — so old, I felt she had looked on unmoved at evil since the world began.

But she was sending for wraps, sending messages. Still she sat there, in the heavy, square-backed chair, her hands upon her knees, her two feet side by side, as motionless as the footstool, her heavy shoulders high and square, her lace cap with square ends falling either side of her face, like the headdress of an Egyptian, her air of monumental calm more like a Theban statue than a living woman.

I turned away.

The figure in the chair rose up at last. Oh, but slowly — slow, and stiff, and ponderous.

I felt in her all the heaviness of the acquiescent since time began.

"That is right," she said to the old man who had brought the maid.

And the maid was old, too.

Three helpless ghosts.

Like death, the sense came over me that I was as badly off with these three as I had been alone. Again I turned from them, frantic.

"I will go out," I cried, "and find help!"

I ran toward the door.

It was then the old man made the first sane suggestion. We could telephone to the police. That would save time! The police would meet us outside Betty's prison.

I followed the butler into the hall. We all stood there, by the telephone. Ages seemed to go by while he was getting the number. And when he had got the number, he could not hear the questions that were put. I tore the receiver out of his hand — I pushed him aside. But I had never used the telephone before, and I spoke too loudly. When they told me so, I sobbed. The voice at the other end was faint and cool. Oh, the easy way the world was taking Betty's fate!

And then the faint, cool voice at the other end said something which showed me I was not believed.

He, too, was thinking I was out of my mind.

The receiver dropped from my hand.

"They can not understand," I said.

I told my aunt that she must go to Bettina, and I would bring the police.

My aunt made some objection. I did not stop to hear it.

"I can not wait for any words! And I will not wait another second for any human soul!"

Then, running beside me as I made for the front door, the old butler spoke again: "— a policeman in our square." He would call the policeman in.

The old man was right. A policeman stood at the corner, watching that no harm should come to the ladies of Lowndes Square.

I had run out, with the butler protesting at my heels. "*Not in the street,* Miss!" he said, with the first hint of emotion I had found in him.

I did not wait, but he must have brought the policeman in during my outpouring. For the look of the hall, during those swift seconds, is stamped in my brain. The elderly maid kneeling at my aunt's feet, changing her shoes; the policeman facing my aunt, helmet in hand, his reverent eye falling before the dignity of Mrs.

Caterham, while I, at his elbow, poured out broken sentences, interlarded with "I'll tell you the rest as we go ——"

My strained voice was grown weak. I wondered, suddenly, if it had ever really reached their ears.

I was like a person, down under the sea, trying to make my voice heard through a mile of murky water.

I was like a woman buried alive, who, in the black middle of the night, beats at her coffin-lid in some deserted grave-yard.

"It is no use!" I cried. "I shall go back alone."

At last we were all going out of the door. The policeman put on his helmet.

"And where is this house?" he asked.

"It is — it is ——"

A pit of blackness opened. I felt myself falling headlong. I heard a cry that made my flesh writhe — as though the cry had been Bettina's and not mine.

A voice said: "It is not possible you have forgotten the address!"

I had never known it!

XIII

It must have been an hour before my reason came back. A strange man was there. A friend, I heard — a Healer.

And all those old, old faces.

What had they done?

What could they do? — except telephone again to the police the vague and non-committal fact of a girl decoyed and lost to sight in the labyrinth of London!

They dared to think they could get me to bed. They found me, not a girl — more a wild animal. Out, out I must go. The police station first.

The Healer and my aunt and I, driving through deserted streets in the small hours of the morning.

At the police station, they listened. They shook their heads. The Healer did most of the talking. I interrupted him: "Do they mean they don't know of any houses where older women bring young girls?"

"I don't say that," the man in uniform answered.

I looked at him. "You don't know these places?"

He hesitated: "We know some."

"You don't mean there are many!"

Again the hesitation. "Not many of the sort you describe."

While they talked I cried out for the last time: "What are we to *do?* Who will help me?"

I did not need their foolish words to realize no help would come from these wooden men in uniform.

Nor from the foggy, self-bemused mystic at my side. Long ago she had turned away from service, even from knowledge. There was "no evil, except as a figment of mortal mind." Peace! Peace! — and this battle, nightly, at her gate! Just once her doors burst open, and she made aware. The sound would soon be faint in her ears and then would cease.

Who else?

Not the Healer — whose way of healing was to look away from the wound.

A vision of my mother rose to stab at me.

And uniformed men were lifting me into a cab. The electric light was fierce in their faces. Then the light and they were gone. We were driving, in silence, through streets of shadow, sharply streaked with light. I crouched in the corner, and fought the flames that shrivelled up my flesh.

Torment! Torment!

Betty with a hundred faces. And every one a separate agony. Betty beginning to understand. Betty looking for her sister — calling out for me. No sister. No friend. Only the fiends of hell.

Torment! Torment!

I was crying fiercely again, and beating with clenched fists. I heard a crash.

The cab was stopped, and strange faces crowded. I was being held. "She has lost her mind," one said.

But no, it wasn't lost. It was serving me with devilish clearness. More pictures, and still more.

Well — well — Betty would die soon.

Like cool water, holy water, came the thought of death. Perhaps she was already dead. O my God, make it true! Let her be dead.

XIV

But when the morning came I could not be sure that Betty was dead. They brought me a telegram. Could it be—? I tore the envelop open.

From the Duncombe housemaid. My mother was sinking, it said, and we were expected back by the night train.

The message had been sent an hour after we left home. It reached Lowndes Square seven hours before I had come beating at the door. That it had lain in the hall forgotten seemed to me hardly to matter now.

Not even to-day could I go home.

I seemed to see the future.

If my mother had not died in the night, the end would very quickly come. There was mercy there. As for me — I knew I should not die till I was sure that Betty was out of the world. As though to our best, our only friend, I turned to the thought of her physical weakness. But I must be sure. I rose up out of my bed — and darkness took me in her arms.

I was ill a long, long while.

Whenever a time came that found me free of fever, able to think again, what could I think except that, even if Betty were dead, there were the others.

The unhappy man had said that always, always there were others.

And the people who knew least went on saying it wasn't true. And the people who knew most said, "There are many thousand 'lost sisters' in London." Who would help me to find mine? — or to sleep once more, knowing Bettina safely dead!

Up and down the streets I should go, looking into the eyes of outcasts under city lamps — looking for the eyes I knew.

In the grey intervals I was conscious of Aunt Josephine being more and more in the room. I came to look for her. She spoke sometimes of my father. I was like him, she said. She had forbidden any one to talk to me about my sister, so that I was the more surprised the day she spoke of Betty of her own accord.

"If you will try to get strong," she said, "I will tell you what I have done to find her. And when you are really well I will do all that any one woman can to help."

So we talked a little — just a little, now and then, about the things I thought of endlessly. And not vaguely, either. She saw how vagueness maddened me. We faced things. How she had misunderstood my mother. That could never be made up now. My mother never knew why we were not with her, nor even that we were not there. Consciousness had never come back to her.

One night, or early morning rather, stands out clear. Vaguely I remembered a renewed struggle and a fresh defeat. Now I had waked out of deep sleep, with a feeling quite safe and sure, at last, that Betty was free. The night-light had burned out. A pearly greyness filled the room. By the open window, the poor, worn-out nurse was sitting, wrapped in a shawl. Her head, leaning against the window-frame, was thrown back, as though to look at something. I don't know whether it was the shawl drawn about drooped shoulders, or the association of a lifted face by the window; but I thought of the hop-picker — and of the promise I had made — yes, and kept.

As long as I had been at Duncombe after that haggard woman passed, no other, with my knowing, had gone hungry away. Not all suffering, then, was utterly vain.

What was the white-capped figure looking at so steadily, so long?

I raised myself on my elbow and leaned forward till I, too, could see. A tracery of branches, bare against a clear-coloured sky, and, through the crossing lines, a little white moon looked through its sky-lattice into the open window of my room.

I got up, so weak I had to cling to table and chair, till I stood by the nurse. She was asleep, poor soul. But I hardly noticed her then.

I was looking up in a kind of ecstasy, for it seemed to me that a pale young face — not like the Bettina I had known, and still Bettina's face — was leaning down out of heaven to bring me comfort.

Or, was it to bring help for those in greater need than I, that Betty was leaning out of heaven? . . .

I remembered I had gone back into that last darkness saying, as I had said ten thousand times before: "*Why had this come to Betty?*"

And now again I asked: "Why had it to be you?"

And it seemed to me that, through this gentle grey of morning, Betty was leading me into the light. For the answer to my question was that the suffering of evil-doers had never been fruitful, as the suffering of the innocent had been.

I pondered that. Was there, then, some life-principle in such pain?

I heard a voice say: "You shall find in mortal ill the seed of Immortal Good."

I knelt down by the window and thanked my sister.

Others shall thank her, too.

THE END

THE PEKING PUG

The Charmed Life of Miss Austin

BY SAMUEL MERWIN

AUTHOR OF "DINNER AT EIGHT," ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY R. M. CROSBY

AND, oh, Edith! While you're in Peking won't you get me one of those darling Peking Pugs — a blue and white one? You can give it to me when we meet at Yokohama. Probably I could buy one in New York, but it would never be the same. I want to *know* that *mine* actually came from the wonderful old city — and direct to me! You just can't imagine how I envy you that part of your tour. I think it was perfectly *dear* of your uncle and aunt to take you there! But aren't you just a *teeny* bit afraid, with everybody saying the revolution may break out yet — *any second?* . . .

Mrs. Wilberly, who was on the couch with one of her nervous headaches, dropped the letter to her lap, saying: "What on earth does Harriet mean by a Peking pug, Edith?"

Miss Austin turned toward her aunt a girlish face that exhibited no trace of whatever adventurous desires may have been stirring behind it. The well modeled mouth, the broad, low forehead, the straight nose, the firmly pointed chin, the healthy coloring, that was softened by a trace of ocean tan, combined to make it an extremely pretty face. The hazel eyes were wide and demure. Though she had been lounging in her room all this rather tiresome afternoon, her fluffy brown hair was in place to the last strand, her shirtwaist was immaculate, her perfect-fitting cloth skirt was as trim as if it had just been ironed to her figure.

"Oh, you know," she replied, rather absently — "tiny sleeve dog, with long hair and cunning little eyes."

"But who ever heard of a blue and white dog? Chinaware, porcelain — yes. But a dog!"

"There are queerer things than that in China," replied Miss Austin sagely, opening the door to the adjoining room, then lingering a moment to ask: "Uncle Frank hasn't sent any word, has he?"

"No; he's still out with those Belgian engineers. He says there will be a fortune here in coal and iron after the revolution."

An expression that might have meant great inner impatience flitted across Miss Austin's face. But she composed herself instantly, and gazed with meditative eyes toward the window. "I was just thinking," she mused, "that it might not be too late yet to go out somewhere and buy the dog." She lingered a moment longer, then suddenly turned and entered her own room.

"Be careful about going out alone!" called her aunt, in a voice that rose nervously.

But the door had closed.

Mrs. Wilberly sank back among the cushions and sighed. "Girls," she reflected, "are becoming utterly unmanageable — what with all the ideas of emancipation and independence they pick up nowadays." That this very hotel, here in the Legation Quarter of Peking, sheltered at the moment a horridly fascinating assemblage of adventurers and adventuresses from every corner of the earth appeared rather to please Edith than otherwise; that, until the lull of the past few weeks, foreign troops had been arriving by every train, and panicky Manchus and Chinese residents had been heaping into carts their gold and silver, their bronzes, ivories, porcelains, cloisonnés, silks, jades, and carvings, and streaming frantically out through every gate of the Tartar City, seemed merely to stir the girl to a romantic impatience for the event.

Mrs. Wilberly pressed her hands to her throbbing temples, and reflected on the burden he bears who assumes responsibility for another life.

Miss Austin came slowly down the broad stairway into the main hall of the hotel, pausing on the lowest step for a glance at the gay, exotic scene before her.

The walls of the passage blazed with the Mandarin coats, skirts, and squares of embroidery that privileged venders were offering for sale. Moving about, chatting quietly, sipping tea or whisky-and-soda with richly gowned women, were officers in the uniforms of many nations, nearly all with the blurred eyes of the hard drinker, yet all vigorous of body. Cynical gentlemen from various legations were in evidence here and there. Almost at her elbow, two Russians, a Norwegian, and a Chinese Mandarin were talking together in French. "It *is* like a little pasteboard Paris set down out here," she thought.

Her breath came more quickly, and a barely perceptible heightening of color intensified the beauty of her girlishly immobile face. She was aware, moving slowly through the queerly mixed little gathering, that she ought to resent the really alarming glances of these fascinating officers; but no resentment could stand against the rising sense of sheer adventurous delight that had set her nerves tingling. She had to pick her way around the wizened old native conjuror who was sitting on his heels in the midst of his glass bowls and lacquered flower-pots and mysterious lumpy objects under colored cloths. And as she stepped out on the porch there was a faint, happy smile dancing in her eyes and hovering about her mouth — a smile that died suddenly when she found herself face to face with Captain Waters and the girl gambler.

She had met the Captain a number of times since he had proved useful to her uncle in arranging one or two rather important introductions. He was a man of nearly middle age, with a close-cropped mustache, a flushed face with minute but observable purple veins over the cheekbones and on the nose, watery blue eyes with a network of criss-cross lines under each, and magnificent shoulders. Edith had lately made a point of avoiding him.

The girl gambler, on the other hand, was easily the most interesting person in the hotel. Apparently she lived there alone. In the dining-room she always had a table to herself. Except in the evenings, she invariably wore a simple blue middy blouse and a short blue skirt; and her black hair hung loose on her collar, gathered in a bow at the neck. "She makes up for sixteen," thought Edith, "looks twenty, and is probably all of twenty-five."

The girl's eyes were a strange, pale green, the palest eyes Edith had ever seen. In figure she was slim. Her thin face was cold, verging on the ascetic, and appeared always to be under perfect control. A strange, silent person, who appeared to have no friends and no emotions, yet was inexplicably attractive. The one definitely known fact regarding her was that she was to be found any evening in the year presiding over a gambling "club" just outside the Quarter and not so far from the Italian glacis.

The two moved squarely into the doorway as Edith came out — there was no escaping them. The Captain was saying something in a low, passionate voice — something that had to be broken off short in the middle of a word.

Embarrassed, Miss Austin looked away from the Captain to the girl. And the girl returned the gaze with a rather pleasing directness.

Meantime Captain Waters' alcoholic flush had deepened to a rich red. "Miss Austin," he finally got out — "Miss Carmichael."

The two girls smiled as they bowed; and with that smile went an unexpected wordless flash of understanding.

"You were going out — alone?" asked the Captain, after a moment.

Miss Austin nodded briskly. "Why not?"

It occurred to her that it is precisely loose, fast men of the Captain's type who hold most desperately to the old notions of seclusion, protection, and rigid propriety for their women-folk.

"Well — it will be dark within the hour, Miss Austin."

Edith repressed an impulse to say: "I am perfectly able to take care of myself, thank you!" Instead she merely inquired: "Isn't there a native market near by where one can buy dogs?"

The Captain looked densely at her without replying; but Miss Carmichael nodded. "Not so near, though," she said. "It's quite a way up the Hatamen Street."

"My dear girl," the Captain put in, genuinely shocked, "you weren't thinking of going clean out of the Quarter — by yourself!"

Edith nodded, with smiling eyes but compressed lips.

"Then you must surely let me go with you."

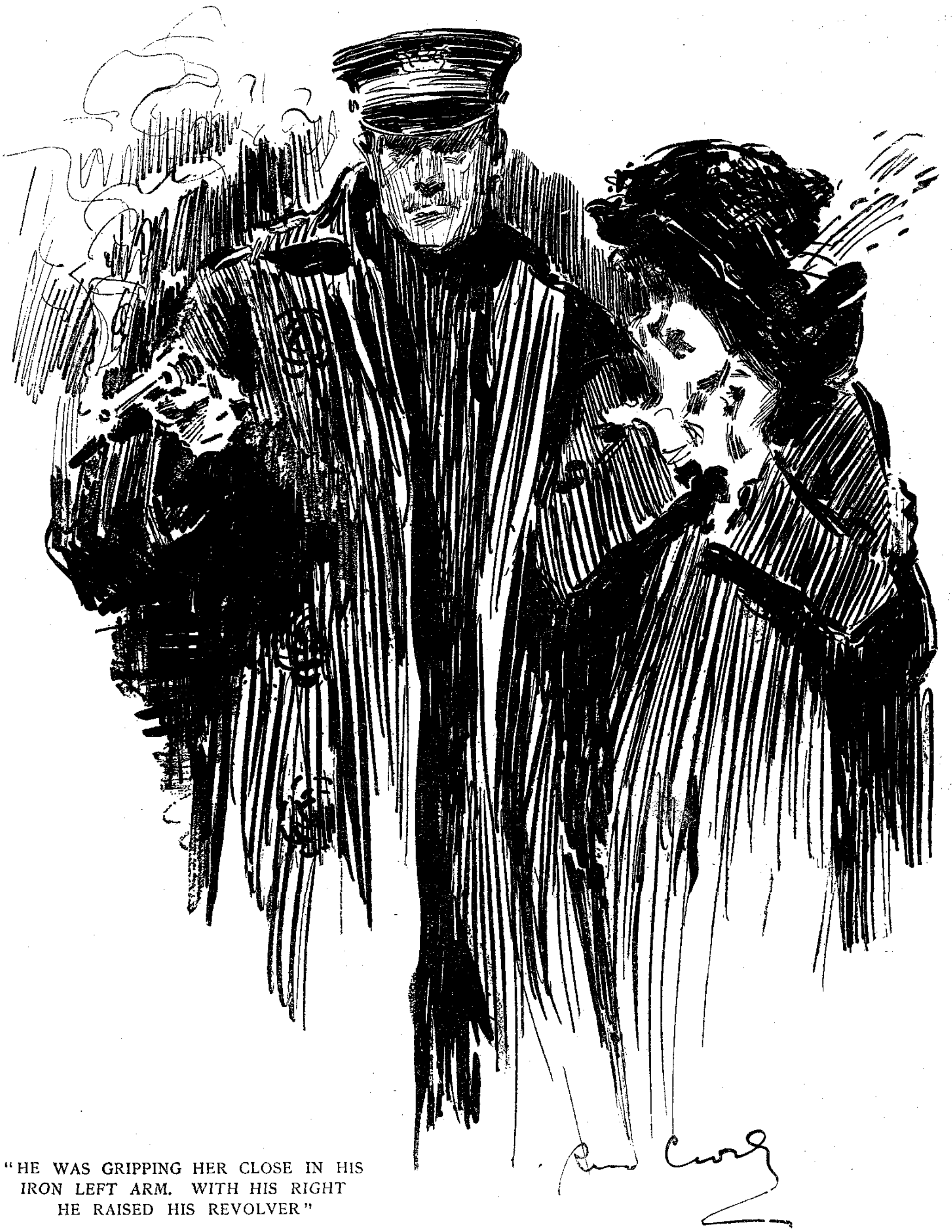
He was insistent. Edith shrank from the prospect. "But, after all," she thought, "perhaps it *would* be safer with him than without him, especially as I don't know where the market is. And, of course, he won't insult me; he'll have to behave." At this thought she was almost regretful. "You go about by yourself, and shock everybody, and nothing ever happens. Nobody ever bothered me but once; and that turned out to be just interesting."

The Captain hurried in for his coat. Miss Carmichael's eyes followed him; then she turned and looked thoughtfully at Miss Austin. "You won't like my saying it," she remarked quietly; "but why don't you wait until morning and go with your own folks?"

Miss Austin bristled, and was pointedly silent.

The girl gambler gave a little shrug. "I know him," she said. "He's the wrong sort."

Miss Austin pursed her lips and turned away. Then the Captain was with them again, and was struggling into his coat. He quite unnecessarily took Edith's arm as they started down the steps. She withdrew it and moved away from him, chatting with perfect composure as she walked along. And Miss Carmichael stood looking after them, closely, until they had passed out through the courtyard, stepped into separate



"HE WAS GRIPPING HER CLOSE IN HIS *IRON LEFT ARM.* WITH HIS *RIGHT* HE RAISED HIS REVOLVER"

'rickshaws, and whirled away. For a moment longer she stood there — thinking of this ungoverned, desperate life of the Coast through which little Miss Austin was moving with utter innocence but with an adventurous question in her demure eyes. She wondered what that aunt was thinking of. Was she insane? Did she suppose you can feed a male brute on whisky, gin, and the Coast ladies for five years, and then expect him to know adventurous innocence when he sees it? . . . Miss Carmichael started slowly down the steps; hesitated; came back to the porch; hesitated again; and finally stood motionless, her pale eyes turned toward the street and the line of waiting 'rickshaws.

Edith Austin breathed deep and looked about with joy in her heart. For two days she had been cooped up in the hotel; now she could again fill her healthy young lungs with the crisp November air. All along Legation Street were soldiers — meek, machine-like Germans, snappy little Japanese, slouching American marines, brigandish Italians, loose-breeched French — walking and loafing by twos and threes. There were extra sentries at the gate-houses of each legation compound. Long heaps of reserve sand-bags were piled along the curbs like paving material. From somewhere — nowhere — floated the magic notes of a bugle.

Lifting her eyes, she could see the top of the fifty-foot Tartar wall that backs and dominates the Legation Quarter. There were sentries up there, too — toy soldiers silhouetted against the radiant sky. Just beyond either end of the confines of the Quarter, more than a mile apart, loomed the great pagodas over the Chien and Hata gates. She knew that these, like the wall, were occupied now — the Hatamen by German troops, the Chienmen by American — in order that the perils of 1900 might not be invited again.

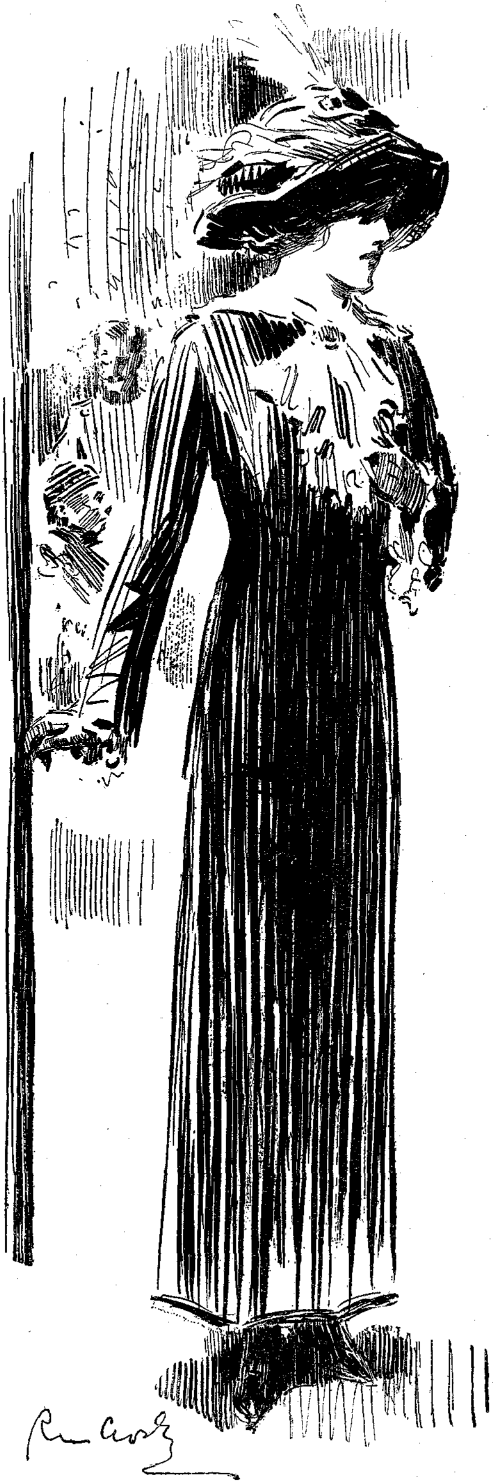
The hotel might be a pasteboard Paris; this, *this* was Peking — Peking the swarming, Peking the ramshackle, Peking the barbaric, Peking the enchanting. She wished, for the moment, that the scattered mutterings of revolution might really gather and break. Then perhaps the royal Manchu family would flee again through the sacred gates, as in 1900; perhaps beautiful, painted harem girls would seek refuge here in the Quarter; perhaps wonderful old eunuchs, right out of Marco Polo and the "Arabian Nights," would come flying in terror from within the secret walls that had hidden the intrigues of an empire.

For a moment the two 'rickshaws ran side by side. Captain Waters looked across at the glowing face beside him; then, with speeding pulse, dropped his eyes.

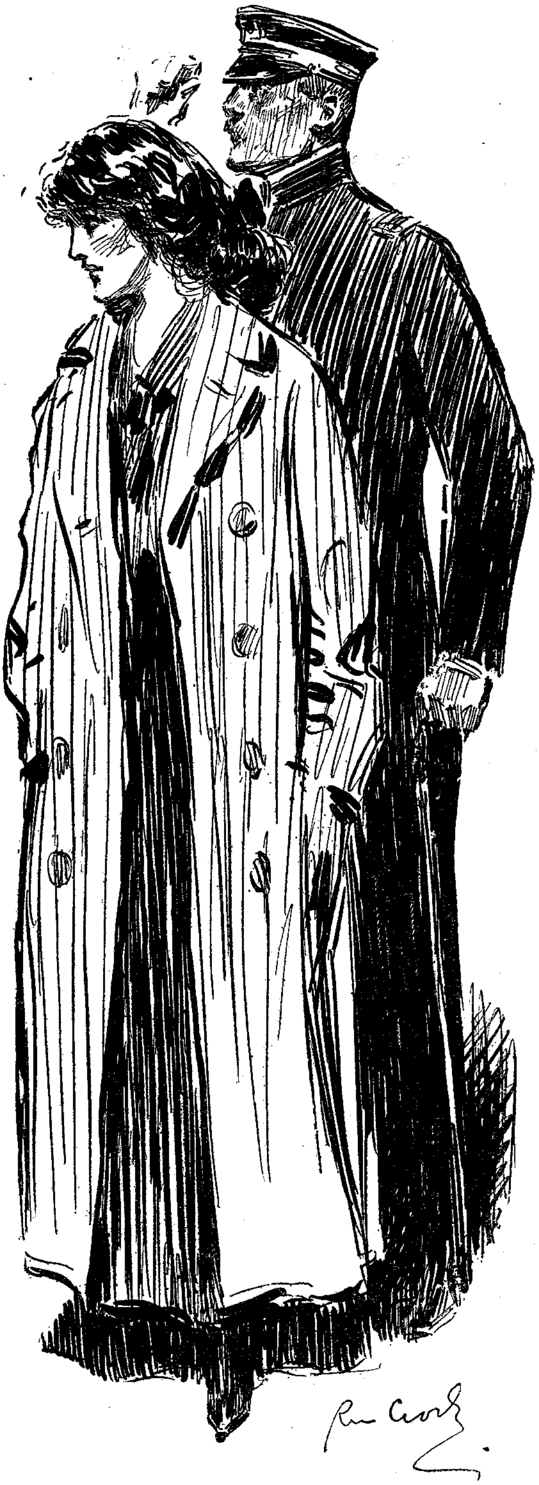
A German sentry stopped them at the East Gate, marked the Captain's uniform, saluted, and stood aside. They swung across the flat glacis to the wide and populous Hatamen Street. As they turned north, the Captain showed his teeth and pointed ahead. The light was fading fast, but she could make out a long string of laden camels approaching, swaying and dipping and winding above the traffic of the street like an endless brown serpent.

"You see," he called across, "the danger is past now. Traffic is going on again. You can trust John Chinaman's instinct."

Edith looked about. Hundreds of yellow-skinned ones were passing: coolies in



"SHE LOOKED FROM THE CAPTAIN TO THE GIRL GAMBLER . . .



. . . THE GIRL RETURNED HER GAZE WITH RATHER PLEASING DIRECTNESS"

tatters or bare of back and leg, merchants in long blue gabardines and black skull-caps with red buttons. A few young men caught her eye, fell in and ran behind her, shouted Oriental insults, and swelled to a crowd.

The 'rickshaws were close. "Are you sure it is safe?" asked Edith.

The Captain scattered them with a look and a word. "Perfectly," he replied then. "They would do this any time. There's always some anti-foreign feeling, you know."

The Captain shouted at the 'rickshaw men. They turned off, picked a way through the crowd, and entered a narrow side street. It was nearly dark here. The Captain stepped down and came to her side.

"We'll leave the 'rickshaws here," he said, "and have a look-see on foot."

He reached up to take her hand, but she eluded him and leaped to the pavement like a boy. As she did so she was uncomfortably aware that his eyes were intent on the free movements of her slim body. Then he took her arm and guided her along the crowded footway, up the dim little street.

They stopped before a row of barred and shuttered buildings.

"That's what I was afraid of," said the Captain easily. "We're too late. Not much doing here after nightfall, you know. They haven't learned yet all that artificial light will do for them. I guess it's a case of go back to the hotel — that is, if you feel you must hurry." He consulted his watch. "It's early — not much after five. We might walk along the big street and see the sights."

Miss Austin looked squarely at him and shook her head. "No," she said; "we'll go back."

There was something in the quality of her voice that caused him to relax his hold on her arm. A puzzled expression flitted into his eyes and out again.

"See," he observed in a casual voice, as they turned; "if you are still thinking of any possible danger, look at that."

Wheeling into the narrow way from the Hatamen Street came an imposing procession of mule-litters and carts, preceded by a huge, gaudily decorated sedan-chair with eight bearers and as many outrunners.

"It's some rich Chinaman," the Captain went on, "coming back with his wives and his treasures. A fortnight ago they were all flying to the sea-coast for foreign protection. This tells the story. If there was the slightest danger you'd never see that outfit turning into this street. John, I tell you, is a wise person — the wisest on earth."

The natives were crowding against the buildings to make way for the great man. Miss Austin stood on tiptoe and looked over a blue shoulder.

Behind the glass front of the red chair some object was moving. It was a face, doubtless the face of the great man. She looked past it to the row of three, four, five litters. Was there a wife — or a concubine — shut away in each? How would it seem to be one of a man's several wives? That was certainly what you had to submit to in China. Perhaps — she was thinking of the man at her side with the big shoulders and the watery blue eyes — perhaps the experience was not wholly unknown to the secret-most hearts of patient women in Western lands. She wished she hadn't come with him — even moved half a step away from him, almost against a staring yellow man. If the man only knew how she hated, *hated* to be touched!

A dark figure appeared on a roof farther down the street, nearly where the red chair was passing. He wore baggy trousers and leggings, a carbine slung across his back, a small turban on his head, and on his left wrist a falcon. By this token she knew him for a Manchu.

The man slowly raised his right hand, poised it for an instant, then threw something that might have been a piece of pipe, and that circled slowly, end over end, into the shadows of the street.

"A bomb!"

She heard the word; then, before her mind could compass the situation, Captain Waters lifted her off the ground and almost threw her back into a recessed doorway.

There was an explosion that flattened her against the wood as if it meant to drive her through, that tore at her ear-drums, that rocked the ground under her feet, that hurled sprawling figures against her. For a moment she was unconscious. She must have fallen into the Captain's arms. Certainly, when her brain cleared, he was gripping her close in his iron left arm, and his right hand was in the act of lowering an automatic pistol. She wondered if he had been shooting.

Her eyes opened wider, and she made an effort to free herself. It must have been a weak effort, for he paid not the slightest attention to it. He was staring out into the little street, that was now a smoking litter of wreckage. He raised his revolver again, hesitated, then lowered it.

The red chair had disappeared entirely; indeed, what appeared to be a piece of it was lying almost at her feet. Where it had been when the bomb fell, the street was choked with a confused tangle of bricks, boards, mules, and human bodies.

The Captain suddenly turned and looked straight down at her. The expression in his eyes first frightened, then angered her. She tried again to push him away, but realized, with a sinking of the heart, that she was weak and faint. In her confusion of mind, it did not occur to her that she had been resting there in his arm for a moment. There was something horribly direct about that look in his eyes.

"It's strange — strange," he was saying, "how things happen. It took this thing to throw us together. Cost some lives, too." Her head sank, and she pushed weakly against his chest with her elbow. His lips brushed her ear. "Cost some lives, but here we are. Queer world — eh, what! Oh, you beauty — you raving little beauty, you! Set me wild when I first saw you — been crazy for you — and here we are! . . . But let's get out of here! You make me forget everything. Quick — keep close to me — this way, along the wall!"

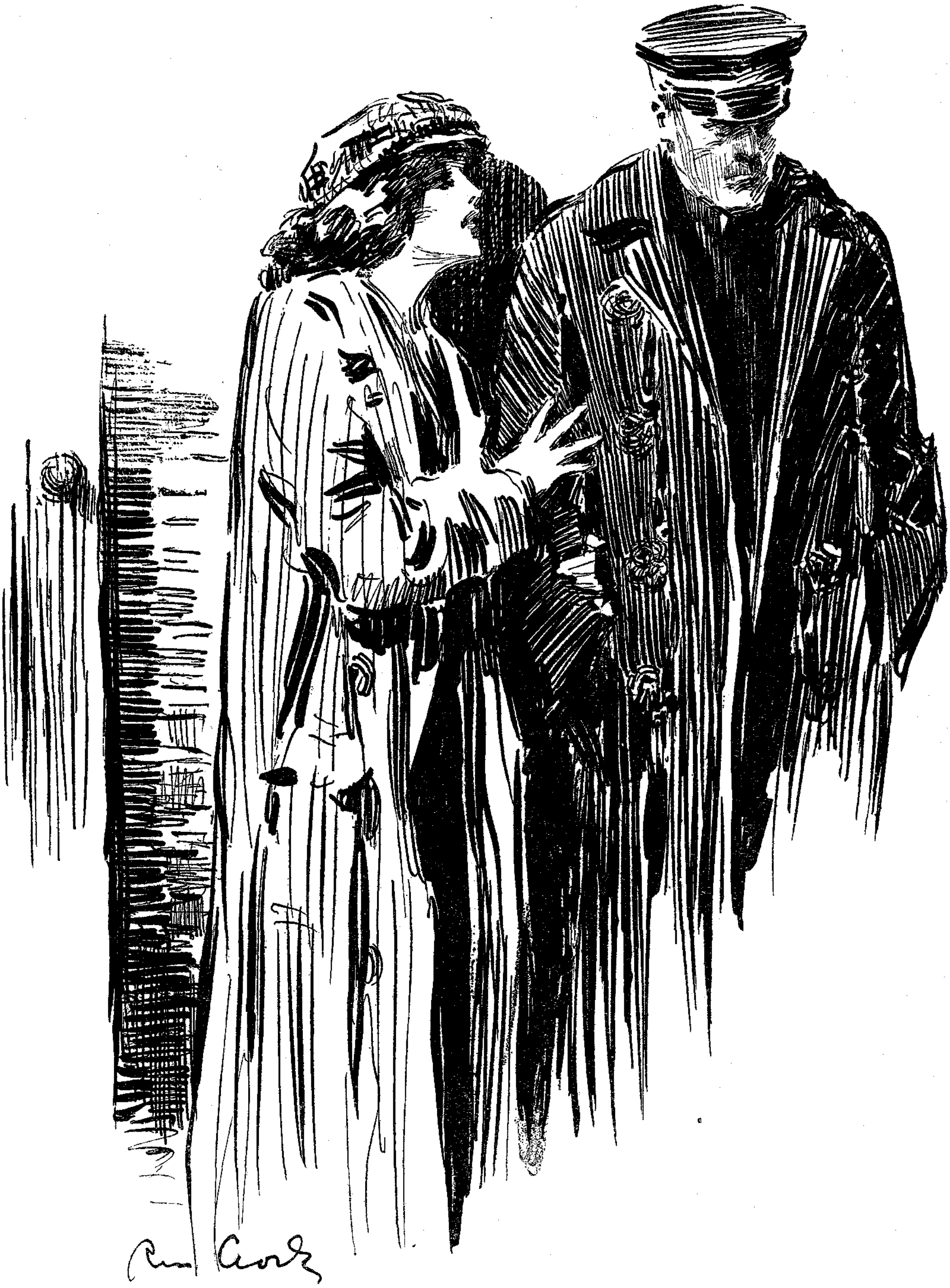
Couldn't the man understand? Couldn't he see that she had fainted, that she — was going to — faint again? . . . She jerked her head back and drew in a quick breath of the choking air. At least, he had relaxed the grip of that awful arm. There he was now, moving sidewise, back to the wall, looking out ahead, but groping for her with his free hand. She caught his sleeve and followed. To this extent he was right; he must at least get her safely to the main road.

"Look out, here!" shouted the Captain. "Step up!"

She obeyed; and stepped on, then over, a human body.

Moaning sounds came from the dark tangle in the street. A mule was waving his hoofs and scrambling; while she watched, the animal got to its feet and staggered out of the dark, cluttered impasse into the Hatamen Street.

A man stumbled blindly against her, and groaned. She had to shoulder him off as she moved slowly forward. Frantic natives were now running from the more or less wrecked shops and dwellings, waving their hands and wailing in falsetto. Children were crying. Two young girls came slowly out of a house from which the front wall had been almost entirely removed. For a moment they blocked the way, looking on with dazed, blank eyes. Their foreheads, noses, and chins were white with powder; their straight, slanting eyebrows were heavily blackened; their cheeks glistened with red paint; and the mouth of each was a perfect



"'LET THAT CHILD ALONE, JIM. I'LL HELP YOU, JIM, IF — IF IT'S HARD'"

Cupid's bow of bright carmine. Their shining black hair was built up into elaborate coiffures. Their dress was the embroidered short coat and trousers of the Chinese gentlewoman who is supposed never to appear in public. And they were beautiful, with a haunting Oriental beauty.

Captain Waters thrust them roughly aside and pressed forward, dragging Miss Austin with him. The two were past the thickest of the wreckage and perhaps half way out of the street when the Captain again pressed her into a doorway. Edith peered out around his bulky person. The street blazed with light now, for one of the shops was in flames. She could see a number of brown-faced men in blue turbans running in from the Hatamen Street. They had knives at their belts, and carried heavy, naked swords that glittered with damascene work and inlaid silver. They were silent, and weirdly businesslike. Those in advance stopped at the first bodies and swiftly looked them over; picked off rings, ear and hair ornaments, purses, and jeweled girdles.

Captain Waters drew a second pistol from his pocket and thrust it into her hand.

"Can you use it?" he asked.

She nodded.

"It's the Manchus. Looks as if they're pulling off the mutiny, after all. Listen!"

Over the moaning and wailing and chattering, over the crackling of a fire that was now roaring out through heavily tiled roofs, came to their ears a faint boom — another — a sudden series. Then, somewhere nearer at hand, a sharp, sputtering rattle. "That's a machine-gun!" cried the Captain.

More of the Manchu soldiers were now pouring into the street. Here and there groups of them were fighting over the loot. Three men with carbines on their backs and old-fashioned revolvers in their hands crowded up to the doorway in which Miss Austin and the Captain were sheltered. The foremost raised his weapon, peered over it at their white faces and at the Captain's uniform; then, to her astonishment, smiled and bowed. Captain Waters returned the bow stiffly. There was a brief exchange of words in an unintelligible singsong. The Captain made way, and drew her aside with him. The soldiers bowed again, with perfect Oriental suavity; then threw their weight against the door, bore it from its hinges, and plunged in over it.

"Better take our chance on getting out of this," said Captain Waters. "He insists that they're not touching foreigners. Anyhow, we'd soon be cooked in here."

They moved slowly along toward the highway. It was better now, and the looters were working with desperate speed. One of them, a giant Tartar with a split lip, had carried the body of a woman from a wrecked litter to a doorstep and propped it up. The dead girl, young and slender, clad in a long robe of red silk with embroidery in gold thread on the shoulders and sleeves, looked almost alive as she half lay, half sat, with her head supported by the door-frame. One arm was doubled stiffly across her chest, as if clasping some precious object. The crouching soldier glanced around from his prize as Miss Austin and her escort approached, saw the pistol in Edith's hand, and smiled up at her admiringly; then turned back to tear a ruby ornament from the ear of the dead girl.

They had got nearly to the Hatamen Street when the Captain again stopped and held her close to the wall.

"We'll go slow here," he said. "There may be trouble outside. Keep ready with that pistol."

There was again something disturbing in his nearness to her. His voice had become hoarse and unsteady, and he seemed to be trying not to look at her. The veins stood out sharply on his flushed temple. Not knowing what to say or do, she raised the pistol and showed him that her finger was caressing the trigger.

Suddenly he turned and looked deep into her eyes.

"Maybe I was too — well, too rough back there," he began, a note of excitement rising in his voice as he went on. Edith felt herself growing cold and shrinking back against the wall. "Maybe I took too much for granted — perhaps you didn't mean it. God, how do I know what you mean! But feeling you there by me — in my arms — your face so near ——"

Again his arms were about her shoulders, holding her close to him. A blaze of hot anger rushed up within her. She wrested her right arm free and waved the pistol unsteadily.

"My God, girl!" he cried. "You don't mean ——!" Then he caught her wrist.

Suddenly Miss Austin's tense body relaxed. Her face lighted with a shock of surprise that ran swiftly off into relief. For, picking her way coolly up the narrow street, her long blanket-coat thrown back exposing the blue middy blouse, a boy's plaid cap on her head, a matter-of-fact expression on her thin face, came Miss Carmichael.

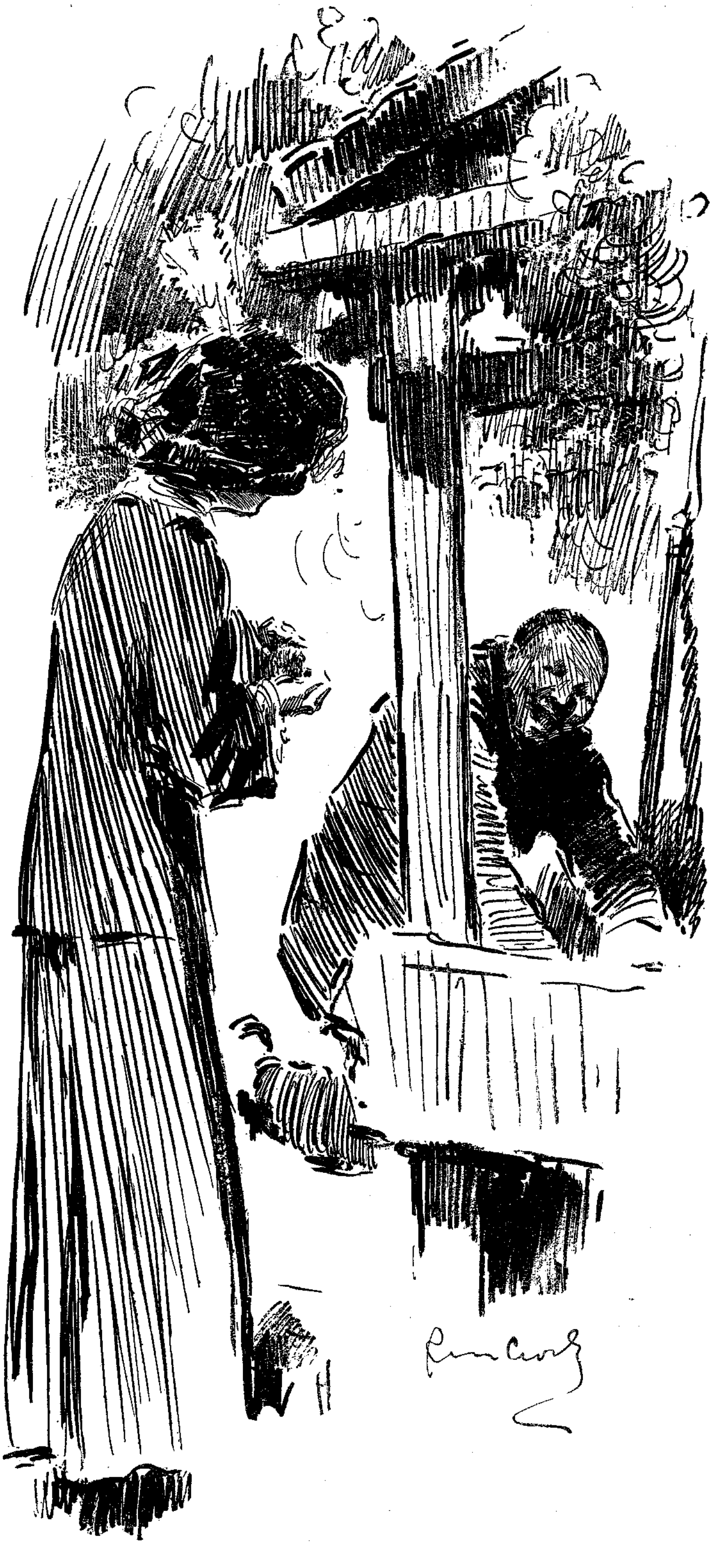
Captain Waters caught the expression on Miss Austin's face, and was puzzled. Then he turned.

"Hello," said Miss Carmichael coolly. "I followed you up. Thought I'd like one of those dogs myself." She was quietly looking them over as she spoke. "The row's 'most finished, I guess. The police are running all over the place. They'll be in here before long, cutting off heads. Better get out before they begin — it's so spattery."

The Captain was biting upward at his mustache. "Think we'll have trouble getting back?"

"We might — a little. But it's unnecessary. There's a mission within five minutes of here — American, too. Let's get her over there. . . . Say, Miss Austin, there's some one trying to talk to you back there. Friend of yours?"

The Tartar of the split lip, still squatting by the body in the red and gold robe, was beckoning



"STILL SMILING, THE TARTAR KNELT BY THE BODY OF THE DEAD GIRL AND SWIFTLY TORE FROM HER FINGERS THE GOLD-MOUNTED RUBIES" and smiling eagerly. He pointed to his prize, and beckoned again.

"He certainly thinks he's got a joke there," said Miss Carmichael. "Watch him."

The soldier, still laughing heartily, raised the arm that was clasped across the dead girl's breast, and prodded at the embroidered sleeve. Out crawled the smallest dog Edith had ever seen — a jet-black, almost blue-black, silky-haired, pug-nosed little creature with one white ear. The hair of his back and sides hung almost to his feet. His beady eyes peered out through a black and white jungle. If he had not been so absurdly small — surely no more than seven or eight inches in length — he might almost have passed for a cocker spaniel. As it was, there was no mistaking him.

"A Peking pug!" cried Miss Austin. All the inner torment of the past ten minutes dropped from her like a discarded cloak. Her eyes danced. Her pistol clattered to the pavement and was forgotten; she did not even know that the Captain, with a queer, dense expression of face, picked it up and without a word put it in his pocket. Nor was she aware that the pale eyes of Miss Carmichael were studying them both out of a cool, expressionless face.

The soldier gathered up the dog in one hand, shook it playfully, and held it out. Miss Austin ran back and took it.

"Is it really for me?" she cried, wholly unconscious that she was speaking in English to a Manchu. "Oh, how nice of you! Thank you ever, *ever* so much!"

The soldier rose and bowed, clasping his hands before his breast. Edith had never seen a man bow with such utter grace; she suddenly felt crude, as if she were the barbarian. Then, still smiling as with a pleasing memory, the Tartar knelt by the body of the dead girl and swiftly, one after another, tore the gold-mounted rubies from her fingers.

The big white man and the two girlish figures walked northward in silence.

"Are you all right?" whispered Miss Carmichael, when the two had fallen a little behind. "Was he very ugly?"

Miss Austin was cuddling the dog close to her face, like a muff. At the question she puckered her brows as if trying to remember something, and a look of pain came into her pretty eyes.

"Oh — it hardly matters now," she said. And then, as if realizing the inadequacy of her reply, added: "But it *was* good of you to come."

Miss Carmichael fell silent. But when the Captain started to turn in toward the gate of the mission compound, she rested a light hand on his arm and whispered something. Then she herself rang the bell; and, when a Chinese servant answered, pressed back against the wall and kept the Captain by her.

"Go in," she called to Miss Austin — "go in. Good night. Don't forget that your dog's a delicate little mite; don't give him meat without chopping it very fine. Good night."

"Why —" faltered Miss Austin — "aren't you coming too?"

"No — not in there. You're best alone. It's safe enough for us, now that the row's over." And, slipping her arm through the Captain's, she hurried him away.

Well around the corner, she stopped short, clasped her two hands about the Captain's big forearm, and looked up into his face, which was baffled and sullen. "What's the matter, Jim?" she whispered.

"Never you mind," he growled.

"You were roughing it with that girl. I saw it. I didn't think you were a dirty coward, Jim; but I guess you are. You're like the rest — one of the worst, really. They've kept you on the Coast too long. It's got you, the way it gets all of them sooner or later. Sometimes — I even think it's got — me."

"Didn't think anything would ever get you," muttered the Captain.

"Never mind that now. What about this girl? Haven't you got *any* brains left? Can't you *see* she doesn't talk our language? Can't you see she's *decent*, Jim?"

Captain Waters chewed his lip. "How was I to help it! She had me going — I was crazy. I can't — now see; I've got to go back to that hotel and talk to her uncle and try to remember I'm an officer. An officer — oh, God! . . . Guess you're right, Elsie. The Coast's got me. It's got me, all right. But talking this way don't help. I'd like to know what I'm to do. I've got to go back to that hotel ——"

"Shut up, Jim," said Miss Carmichael. Still clasping his arm, she leaned back against the wall. Her face looked white and delicate in the faint light. Her usually hard mouth had softened. "There's a few things I ain't, Jim," she breathed. "I'm a gambler, yes. I work for big Tex Connor of Shanghai, yes. But there's a few things I ain't. There's no man ever made love to me in Peking — not in Peking. . . . Jim, you leave that girl alone. Do you get me? They'll only be here a week or two. I guess there's a little plain manhood left in you somewhere." She caught her breath. Her pale eyes were luminous. Something that might have been either a sob or a bitter little laugh escaped her. Under pretense of brushing back a straying lock of hair, she covered her face for a moment with her hand. Then her head drooped and sank against his breast. His arm slid about her shoulders.

"Let that child alone, Jim," she murmured. "I — I'll help you, Jim, if — if it's hard." The thin shoulders shook. "Let her alone, that's all!"

Captain Waters, between density, surprise, and weakness, looked down at the dark head against his coat. "You're acting as if you *cared* about her!" he muttered.

Then he kissed her.

A khaki-clad sergeant of marines (on special duty) held conference with four grave missionaries in the big house at the head of the compound. Five minutes later a rocket swished and soared in a slow curve high above the roofs of the Tartar City, north, by the great Hatamen Street. Twenty minutes more and a long column of troops — slouching fellows in gray campaign hats — came shuffling up on the double quick, whistling, to a man, "I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy" as an accelerant to the step.

While the beardless captain, leaving his Kentucky horse at the gate, entered the compound, two sergeants conversed by the long line of fighting men in the road. One stood on his two legs and grinned unreservedly. The other leaned on a new-model Springfield and softly tapped his fixed bayonet.

"How many men did ye bring on th' dangerous mission, Pete?" inquired the one.

"A full comp'ny — hundred an' six."

"Th' last-mentioned six would 'a' done, Pete."

"Then why in the name iv ——"

"Tut, tut, me boy. 'Tis holy ground ye're all but standin' on. 'Twas a little matter iv th' tellyphone wires bein' down. An' th' exercise ull be fine f'r th' boys. Not to say there ain't a bit o' class to th' young lady that thinks mebbe she'd like to go back to th' hotel — *an'* her dog."

So it came about that forty men in khaki with fixed bayonets marched in rigid fours before the 'rickshaw of Miss Austin, and sixty-six men marched as rigidly by fours behind. To the beardless captain who rode beside her thinking up common acquaintances she confided impulsively:

"I never realized before that our own soldiers were so good-looking. Why, it's just like being with a lot of the boys at home."

To which the beardless one replied:

"Well, of course, in the Marine Corps — have to be picked men, in a way — you see, the work we do." . . . And inasmuch as his barytone voice had been found pleasing by the ladies of many ports, he hummed blithely:

"From the halls of Montezumas to the shores of
Tripolee
We fight our country's battles on the land and
on the sea."

When they reached the hotel he said good night and then shook hands twice.

Miss Austin smuggled the morsel of a dog under her coat and went directly to her own room. Here her first task was to make Wing Tee Wee — which was his new name; as was fitting, for did it not stand that "Wing Tee Wee was a sweet Chinee"? — to make Wing as comfortable as possible exactly in the middle of the broad white bed.

Then she confronted the mirror, and, momentarily depressed by the wan, pallid face that stared out at her, slapped her cheeks and rubbed her temples and forehead to bring the color back. After which she rearranged her somewhat tousled hair and dressed for dinner.

Looking only a little less than her usual brisk self, she sat on the edge of the bed and examined little Wing with great care.

"Yes," she said, holding him up to the light and playing with his one white ear, "you may not be quite the same sort of blue and white as the dishes and vases, but that wonderful hair of yours is certainly about as near blue as black can be."

There was a knock at the door, and Mrs. Wilberly, still in negligée and drowsy of eye, came in from the adjoining room.

"I've had quite a nap," she observed. Then — "Oh, you got that dog!"

Her niece nodded brightly, and held him up for inspection.

"He *is* cunning," mused Mrs. Wilberly. "But — oh, yes! It wasn't a dog Harriet wanted. Wait a minute — I can show you on the letter. We read it wrong. It isn't a *P* at all. It's meant for an *R*. But the pen points spread out on the last down stroke, and the ink didn't run. If you look closely — there! You can see the little scratches. It's a rug she wants, not a pug — a Peking Rug."

"Oh, I see," replied Miss Austin demurely. "It was a natural enough mistake, though. And it's just as well, because now I can keep Wing for myself. . . . Look at him, Aunt! Did you ever in *your* life see anything so perfectly *darling?"*

A new episode in The Charmed Life of Miss Austin — a wild story of the China Coast, by Samuel Merwin — will appear in the February McCLURE'S — out January 15

THE SIXTY-FIRST SECOND

BY

OWEN JOHNSON

AUTHOR OF "STOVER AT YALE," ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY A. B. WENZELL

Preceding instalments.—John G. Slade and Bernard L. Majendie are conspicuous rival figures on the New York Stock Exchange, which is threatened with a great financial panic. It is important to Slade to know what Majendie's resources are for weathering the panic, and he tries to obtain this knowledge from Rita Kildair, who is that evening to give a supper which Majendie will attend. Slade plays upon Mrs. Kildair's love of jewels by leaving with her a valuable ruby ring.

Mrs. Kildair's supper is informal, and she asks her guests to help her prepare it. They go freely about her studio apartment, and in and out of her bedroom, where she has left Slade's ruby on her dressing-table. Just as they seat themselves at supper, Mrs. Kildair discovers that the ruby is missing. With the exception of Majendie, of Beecher, who has fallen under the spell of a young actress, Nan Charters, who is present, and of Slade, none of the guests are absolutely above suspicion. Mrs. Kildair has the doors locked, and declares that she will count one hundred in the dark. If, by the hundredth count, the ring has not been placed on the table, she will send for detectives to search her guests. The count goes to sixty-one, when a clatter is heard on the table. Mrs. Kildair continues the count to the end, but when the lights are lit the table is discovered bare. Detectives are sent for, but the ring is not found.

Young Beecher engages the services of the famous detective McKenna; while he is telling him the story, word comes that Majendie's Trust Company has gone down, and that the great panic is on. The next afternoon Beecher, while passing the Grand Central Station, meets Mrs. Enos Bloodgood, one of the guests under suspicion, evidently on the point of leaving New York. Beecher, knowing her relation to Majendie, divines that she intends to elope with him. At that moment he sees the headline of an extra, announcing Majendie's suicide. He steps into the carriage with Mrs. Bloodgood and orders the coachman to drive to Mrs. Kildair's.

CHAPTER XI

FOR an interval, while the coachman, spurred on by the prospect of reward, tore through the short streets, Beecher continued to look into Mrs. Bloodgood's eyes — eyes that were aghast with mute, terrified interrogations which she did not dare to phrase.

Suddenly she perceived the "extra" which he had bought. She extended her hand, looking at it fearfully.

"Give it to me," she said.

He hesitated, and in the moment of irresolution she seized it. A cry of pain, a low cry torn from the soul, made him stiffen in his seat, steeling himself against the expected. But no further sound came. When he turned, she was sitting transfixed, staring wide-eyed at the newspaper which seemed glued to her fingers. Alarmed at the rigidity of her emotion, he leaned over and disengaged the paper from her unresisting fingers. The action seemed abruptly to revive her. She gave another cry, and tore the newspaper from him with such energy that a great, ill-shaped fragment remained in her clutch.

"No, no, not that — no, no!" she cried, frantically seeking to decipher the bare six lines that recorded the tragedy. All at once she flung the sheet from her, turning to read his face.

"Ah, it is true!" she cried.

"Mrs. Bloodgood, Mrs. Bloodgood!" said Beecher, frightened at the paroxysm that shook her body. But the emotion was still of horror, without as yet the realization of the finality that had come. She felt that Majendie was in danger — in terrible danger; that she must get to him, somehow, some way, and fling herself in front of that awful something that threatened him. She seized the arm of the terrified young man, imploring him, still dry-eyed:

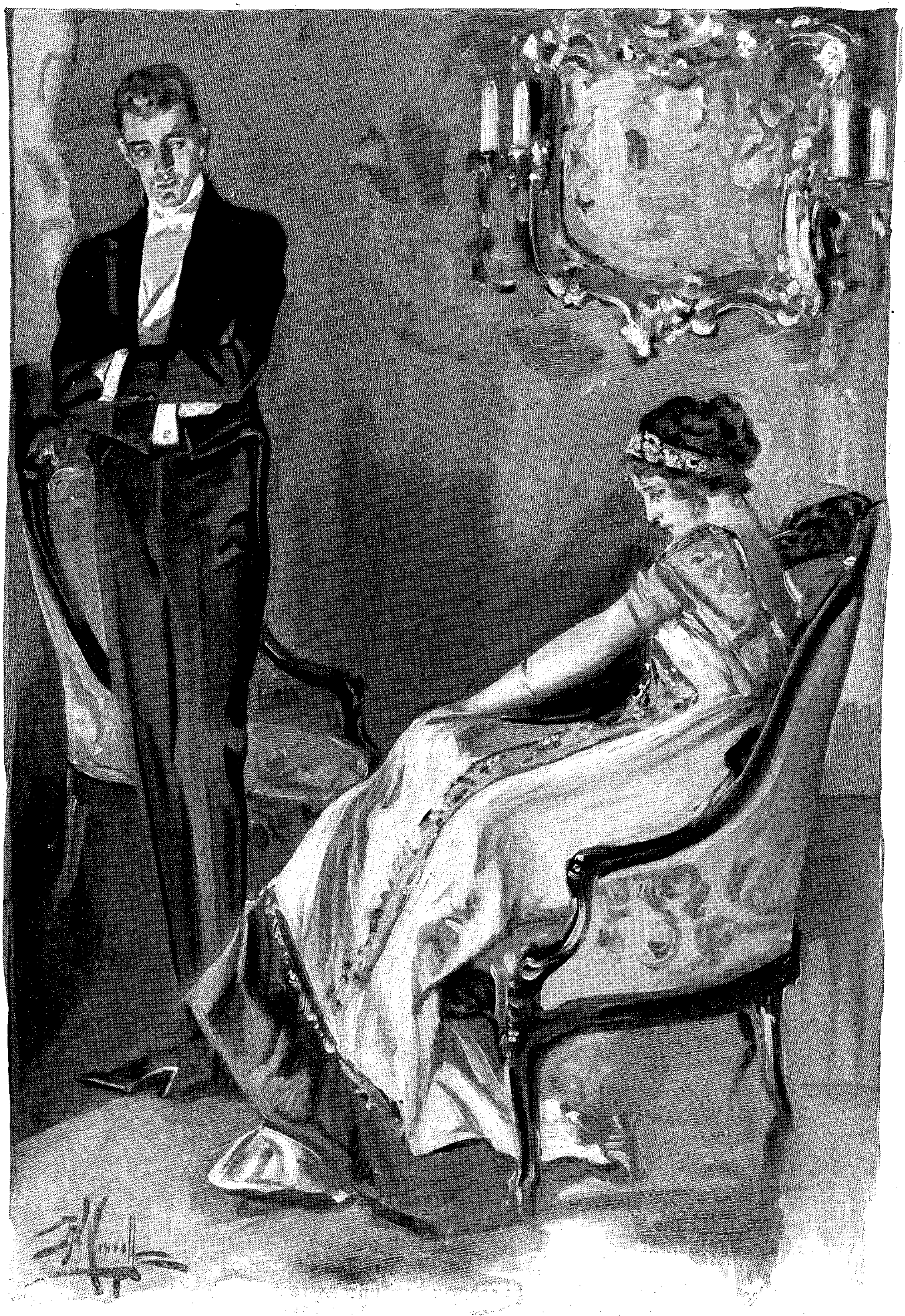
"Take me to him — at once — no — I must — take me — Bernard — oh!"

She fell back exhausted, faint.

"Be calm; please be calm," he repeated, helpless before the utter disorder of her suffering. All at once the annihilation of self into which she had fallen was succeeded by a quick paroxysm of energy. She bounded upright on the seat, seizing his arm so that the nails hurt him.

"I will go to him!" she cried. "You shall not stop me. He may be only wounded. The report is false — must be false. I will go to him!"

"The very thing that you must not do — that you can not do," he said firmly; and then, seized with an inspiration, he added: "Listen —



"'I HAVE NOT HESITATED TO TRUST IN YOU—YOU MUST IN ME'" listen to me, Mrs. Bloodgood, I am taking you to Rita's; if you must go to him, go with her. Two women can go; one would cause a great scandal. You can not put that on him — you must think of him now. We are going to Rita's — Rita's!" he added, putting his lips to her ears to make her hear him. He put his hand on her shoulder and forced her gently back. She held her clasped hands rigidly strained between her knees, staring out of the carriage.

"He is not dead," she said as in a whisper; "he is wounded."

"As soon as we get to Rita's," he continued reassuringly, "I will telephone. I'll find out everything."

"Wounded," she repeated, not hearing him.

"If he is, we three can go — it will seem quite natural," he said hastily, eyeing nervously her dry, uncomprehending grief, fearing the coming outburst of realization.

"We are almost there," he said, looking out of the window. "Hold on to yourself. Be game. There are always a few persons below."

She did not answer, but her lips curled slightly in contempt, and she put her hand spasmodically to her throat.

"You're right, the whole thing may be false — a wild rumor," he said quickly, talking to her as to a child. "A fake story — who knows? See, there are no details. Here we are. A little courage! Go right into the elevator."

He signaled the driver to wait, and followed her hastily into the elevator, standing between her bowed figure and the boy.

Mrs. Kildair was in the studio, pacing the floor; and at the first glance each saw that she knew the report, and that it was true. Mrs. Bloodgood crumpled on the floor, unconscious.

"My smelling-salts are on my bureau," said Mrs. Kildair quickly. "Lift her on the sofa first, and then get them."

"Is it true?" he said, raising the slender, lifeless body.

"True."

"Dead?"

"Yes."

"When did it happen?"

"At two o'clock."

"She wishes to go to him," he said warningly. "The carriage is below. She has her trunks. She was to have met him at the station. What shall I do?"

"She must be got back to her house as soon as possible," said Mrs. Kildair with energy. "The trunks must return at once. Everything hangs on a hair; I know Bloodgood."

She cast a glance at the still inanimate body and added: "Wait. Spirits of ammonia will be better. I'll get it."

Mrs. Bloodgood returned to consciousness slowly, looking from one to the other with a dazed, pleading look.

"Then it is so," she said at last.

The two looked at her without being able to answer. Suddenly she bounded up erect, her fists striking her forehead.

"It is I who have done it!" she cried, and for the second time fell back lifeless on the floor.

"Go down now; send the trunks back," said Mrs. Kildair. "Tell him to do it as quickly as possible — no, tell him nothing. Go quickly."

When Beecher returned, Mrs. Bloodgood was on her feet again, walking ceaselessly, one hand clutching a handkerchief to press back the sobs that shook her from time to time, the other arm stretched out in front of her, beating a mechanical time to the one phrase which she repeated again and again:

"I've done it — I've done it — I've done it!"

Mrs. Kildair, leaning by the piano, knowing that each period must have its expression, waited the right moment. Beecher, at a sign from her, slipped quietly into a chair.

"Yes, it's I — it's I — I!" said the indistinguishable voice.

"You have done nothing," said Mrs. Kildair solemnly. "It is fate."

"No, no. Only I am to blame," she answered, stopping short, each word coming slowly through the torrents of tears.

Mrs. Kildair passed quietly to her side.

"You are not to blame, dear," she said; "don't think that."

"Ah, no — you don't know," she said, suddenly acquiring a terrible calm that froze the young man with horror. "At what time did he — did it happen?"

"At two."

"I knew it! Ten minutes before, he telephoned me; he said — oh, what do I know? — said a thousand things but the one in his mind. Asked me if I still was resolved to go."

"But then, Elise ——"

"You don't understand. It was I who insisted on this going — I — I! I told him, if he would not go, I would come openly to his house — I would not be separated from him. Oh, my God, I didn't know — I didn't!"

She abandoned herself to her transports once more, flinging herself on her knees and praying, as an uncomprehending child prays: "O God, don't let it be true — don't let it!"

Beecher covered his eyes suddenly with his hands. Mrs. Kildair allowed her for a moment to tire herself in supplication and anguish. Then she went to her, grasping her shoulder.

"Elise."

Mrs. Bloodgood stopped, rose, and went to the window, where she stood swaying.

"I'm going to him," she said.

"Get hold of yourself," said Mrs. Kildair, avoiding the error of opposition.

For a long moment neither spoke, while Mrs. Bloodgood, passing to and fro, struggled to fight down the sobs that were choking her. At last she stopped, facing Mrs. Kildair.

"I am going to him," she said again.

The other woman, with a look of great compassion, shook her head in a slow negation.

"But he said I could!" she cried, stretching out her hands in supplication. "Mr. Beecher said so!"

"You can't."

"But he said so — he promised."

"No; it is impossible."

"Oh, I *will* go!"

"There are twenty reporters waiting for just that," said Mrs. Kildair. Then, raising her voice, she said impressively: "Elise, there is something you must do — something ten times more terrible."

"What?"

"Return home — and at once."

"Never!" The cry burst from her as her whole body was shaken with indignation. "Never in the world — never again!"

"Listen," said Mrs. Kildair, seizing her arm, and Beecher was struck with the savageness of her energy. "Things are no longer the same. You are alone — absolutely alone. Do you understand what that means — without a cent — alone?"

"What do I care?"

"Not now; but in a week, in a month — You think you know the greatest suffering in the world: you don't — the greatest is poverty. Whatever has happened, you are Mrs. Enos Bloodgood. Only yourself can destroy that. One life is ended in you. You have loved. That will never come again — not the same. Life is long and terrible."

"What, you can suggest such a thing?" said Mrs. Bloodgood indignantly. "Such an infamy?"

"Yes — because I know. The world is not an equal one. A woman can not fight as a man can. A year from now, when you can suffer no further, do you want to wake up in a dingy boarding-house, cut off from all you have lived in? For a great love, perhaps — but to be alone? No, no! Elise, you will do as I say because I can see better than you. You are Mrs. Enos Bloodgood — you have everything that a million women covet. It is your life; you will go back."

"Ah, how can you say that to me now?" said Mrs. Bloodgood, pressing her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Because the world is different from the world of this morning — because everything is different, Elise. There are no longer the reasons that existed. You are alone against the world. You know your husband — one public word or action, and he will cast you off like an old shoe."

"How can I go back?" she said, sitting down, half subdued. "How can I get the strength? I don't know yet what has happened. I can't realize it — oh, if I had only had my way! If he had only let me leave a month — two months ago. If I'd only been firm; if we had gone that night — that night we were here — when I begged him to. If he had only loved me more than his honor, as I loved him. If only I——"

"Elise," said the quiet voice of Mrs. Kildair.

The young woman checked herself, but almost immediately broke out again:

"And now you want me to go back to *him*. Oh, if you knew how I hate him, how I loathe him — what that life means — how cruel he can be, how he can make me suffer by a word or a look — how he enjoys ——"

"Elise, Elise!"

"Oh, I can't go, Rita! Don't ask me to go now. Let me stay a while here, just to-night, where I can weep," she cried.

"No, no. It must be now — soon. You have left your home with your trunks — he knows it. If you return — you return because you are worried — the panic — on his account."

"Ah, what a vile lie!"

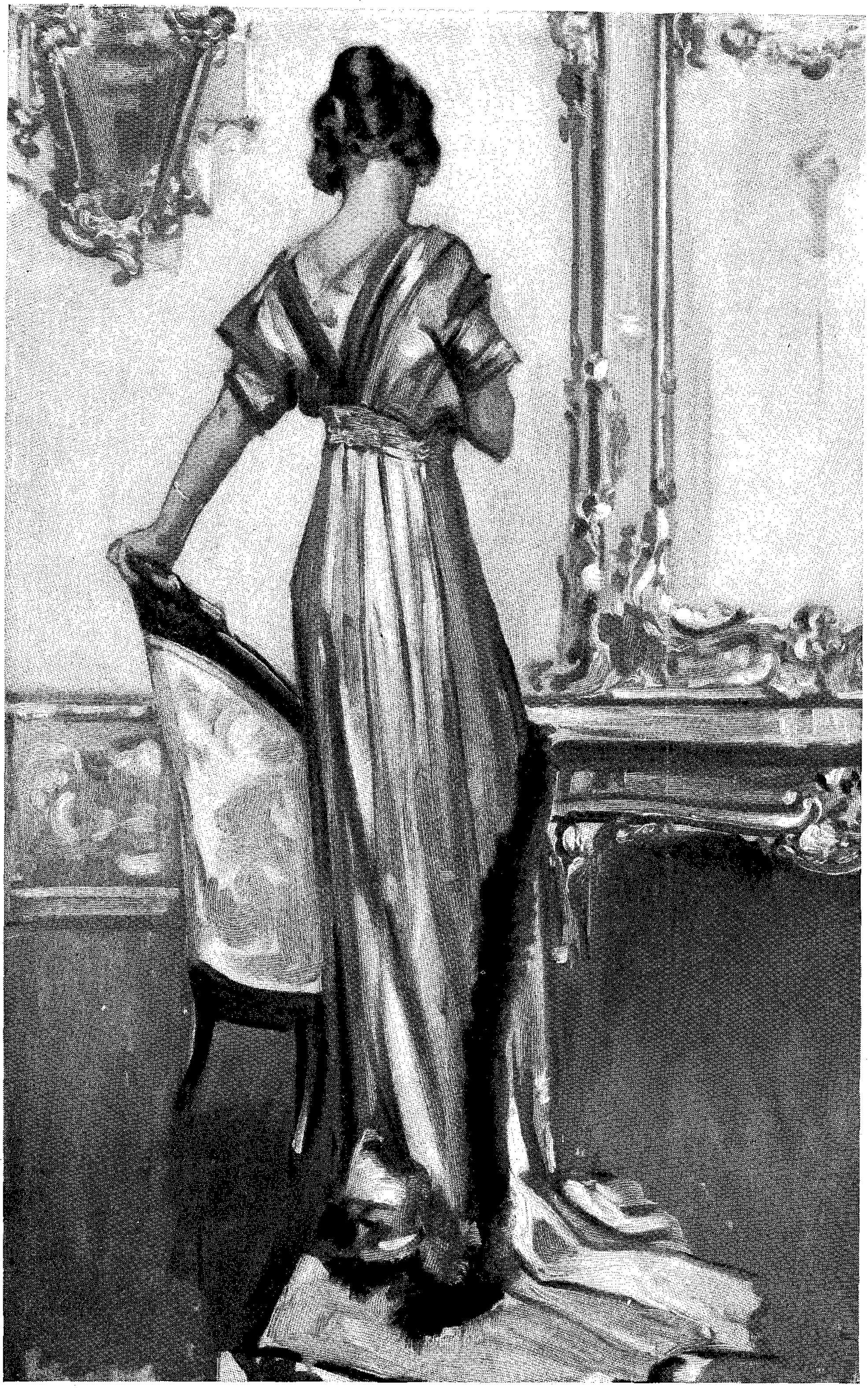
"Elise," said Mrs. Kildair, coming forward again and arresting the other's arm, "listen. You are not what I am. You are not strong — you are weak. You are a woman of the world, worldly, loving worldly things, who for a moment has been transformed by a great passion. The whole earth has no such passion any longer. Do you understand? Something is gone — your youth is ended. Keep tight hold of the little that is left. Come, be strong. Dissimulate as you have before. Come."

"Not now," said Mrs. Bloodgood, terrified.

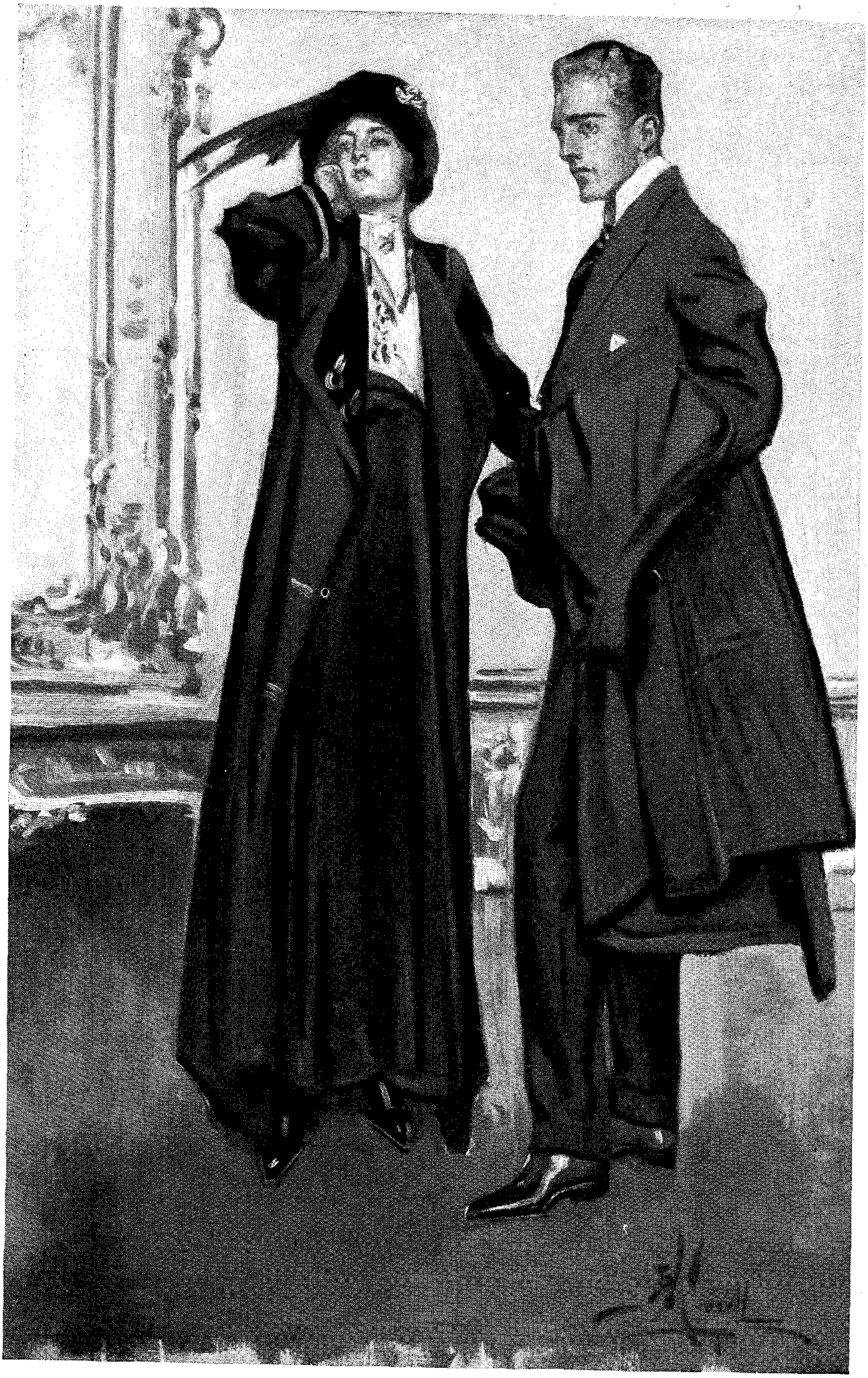
"Yes, now. If possible, you must be back before he returns."

And Beecher, from his chair where he had watched, forgotten by both women, saw Mrs. Kildair, who not for a moment had deviated from the vital issue, draw the unresisting woman by the very force of her energy into the bedroom, from which shortly they emerged again.

"I am ready," said Mrs. Bloodgood in a voice that was scarcely distinguishable. She had thrown over her head a thick veil of Mrs. Kildair's, behind which her features were only dimly visible.



"'YOU MUST GO BACK TO YOUR HUSBAND.'—'WHAT, YOU CAN SUGGEST SUCH A THING?' ONE. A WOMAN CAN NOT



THE OTHER ASKED INDIGNANTLY.—'YES—BECAUSE I KNOW. THE WORLD IS NOT AN EQUAL FIGHT AS A MAN CAN'"

"Telephone for a carriage," said Mrs. Kildair.

"I have done so," said Beecher, who had availed himself of the interval.

"But the trunks?" said Mrs. Bloodgood, turning helplessly.

"They went back long ago."

"Ah." She took a few weak steps, and turned. "But I shall see him?"

"I give you my word."

"To-night?"

"To-night," replied Mrs. Kildair, who sent a sign to Beecher: "I will let you know."

Mrs. Bloodgood made a little sign of acquiescence, and passed out of the door. The carriage was waiting. Beecher silently handed her into it, feeling the sudden heaviness on his arm. They rolled away. She did not lift her veil, and he could not guess what look was on her face. Twice she made him change their course, in order to put off the final moment.

"You have been kind," she said at last. "I owe you much. Thank you. Now I will go back." She hesitated a moment, and said with an accent that can not be described: "Home."

"Don't speak of thanks at such a time," he said hastily. "If I can help you in any way, any time——"

"I know." All at once, forgetting his presence, she burst out: "Oh, how I loved him! I would have done anything for him—anything!"

"Be careful, Mrs. Bloodgood," he said, alarmed. "Be careful — please."

"You need have no fear," she said slowly. "All that is over." But, still obsessed, she seized his arm. "Only I want you to know that I loved him so that nothing made any difference. Any one can know it. I would have gone——"

"I know it," he said quickly, taking her hand.

"Oh, yes, I loved him — the only real thing in my life!" she repeated, sinking back.

Ahead he saw the great Italian façade of the Bloodgoods' residence. As they neared the steps, his quick eye perceived the squat, stolid figure of Mr. Enos Bloodgood at the door.

"He is just come out — your husband," he said hurriedly, with a sudden new sensation of dread. And he repeated, fearing she did not understand the danger: "Be careful; he is there — your husband."

"Yes, I saw him."

She took the veil from her hat, and, folding it, handed it to him, her face set in hardness.

"You might say Mrs. Kildair had invited——"

"I know what to say," she said, checking him, and a smile incongruous at the moment gave the last touch of tragedy to the imagination of her companion. "Open the door."

He gazed at her, struck with this strange, dual personality — the abandon of the woman who loved and the calm of the woman who hated.

"Open the door," she repeated sharply.

Recalled to his senses, he sprang out and gave her his hand, accompanying her to the chiseled marble steps, where he left her, with a lift of his hat to the husband above, who awaited her with a quiet, cynical enjoyment.

"I thought, my dear, you had gone off for a jolly little jaunt," said Mr. Bloodgood, without variation in the provoking evenness of his voice.

She came up the steps to his level, and acknowledged his presence with an inclination of her head.

"I intended to," she said, in the same ceremonious tone. "But I was so alarmed at the news from Wall Street that I did not wish to leave you at such a time."

"Indeed? I am quite touched," he answered, with perfect solemnity. "You are always so thoughtful, my dear."

She entered. He followed her as though shutting off all retreat, and the gorgeous flunky who had run out disappeared, too. To Beecher, with all the anguish of the scene at Rita Kildair's still vivid in his mind, it was as though he had seen a living woman enter her appointed tomb.

"Where shall I drive, sir?" said the driver.

"Anywhere!" he cried furiously.

But at the end of five minutes he emerged from the stupor into which he had been plunged, the somber horror rolling away like scudding storm-clouds. A new emotion — the inevitable personal application — broke over him like a ray of light.

"To be loved like that—" he thought suddenly, with a feeling of envy. "How terrible, and yet what an emotion!"

And he gave directions to drive to Nan Charters' with a new curiosity in his soul that, strangely enough, even against his will, intruded itself amid all the somber melancholy which the reverse of a glittering medal had brought.

CHAPTER XII

HE had completely forgotten, in the press of dramatic events, the disturbing fact of Nan Charters' return the night of the theft. He remembered it suddenly, as one remembers sorrow after a profound sleep. But the recalling of it affected him differently. The revelation of Mrs. Bloodgood's hidden life had left him in a dangerous and vulnerable mood — a mood of quickened compassion and outgoing sympathy. He was still determined to force a direct answer from Miss Charters, but already he had formed that answer in his heart, as he for the hour felt no longer the selfish combat of vanity, but the need of charity and gentleness.

In one of the profound moods which color the visible world, he stood at the window of the little sitting-room, waiting her arrival, looking out on the serried flight of unutterably commonplace roofs, gray and drab with the gray of the turning day. And it seemed to him that this twilight was different from other twilights, heavily weighted down with more of the sadness of inexplicable lives. One tragedy seemed to invoke tragedies everywhere, in the cramped immobility of the inscrutable windows which had not yet begun to warm with the flicker of human cheer. He saw only the brutal struggle to live, and felt only the mystery of suffering, which was still a thing apart from his life. Standing reverently thus, he asked himself two questions which, sooner or later, each man of heart and sensibility puts to himself in the awakening to conscious existence:

"Why do they go on?"

"What is my justification?"

And in his heart, still young and stirred to sympathy, he felt the beginning of a revolt at what he had been, at his inability to find a satisfying answer to that second question. He no longer awaited the interview in the spirit of strife, but with a sudden feeling of impulsive friendliness which, had he been an older man, might have alarmed him with its dangers. The profound melancholy of youth, violent because unconquered and strange, had him still in its grip when, all at once, he felt an emotion of well-being and returning comfort.

She came into the room and without formal greeting gave him her hand with a welcome in her eyes, as though their friendship were of such strong duration that formalities were out of place.

"Draw the curtains," she said, going to the electric lamp on the table, which woke like a golden sun from the shadows. "It's cozier. Shall we light the fire? Yes, it's more cheery."

"Let me," he said hastily.

"Quite unnecessary."

He watched her sudden stooping movement, that brought the loose, intricate tea-gown about her agile body, outlining the limbs, which had the quick animal grace that is peculiar to the unconquered maiden. Her pose, strong and alive with power and self-reliance, recalled to him sharply the sense of opposition. He was annoyed that she should have done so naturally what he should have done, feeling in her too much self-reliance.

She rose, looking down with a childish delight at the sudden burst and roar of the flame. Then she turned, studying his face. The artist in her made her quickly aware of the remnants of the emotion which had stirred him.

"What is it?" she said, with the gentleness that was so tantalizing to him. "You have a strange look."

"Yes," he answered; "I have been behind the scenes."

"What do you mean?"

"I have been with Mrs. Bloodgood all the afternoon — found her at the station as she was leaving."

"Mrs. Bloodgood was running away," she said, puzzled, but with a fear in her eyes that did not escape him.

"What — you did not know!" he exclaimed. "Majendie killed himself this afternoon at two o'clock."

"Majendie — Mrs. Bloodgood!"

She looked at him a moment with a face struck with horror, and then fell back into a chair, seized with the suddenness of the climax.

"I beg your pardon; I thought you knew," he blurted out.

"No, no — nothing. Tell me — tell me all," she said; and he saw that back of her alarm was a significance to her that heightened the effect of the tragedy.

He told her first the bare details of the suicide as he knew them; and then, in response to her hurried questions, began to retell the afternoon. He spoke impulsively, almost as an echo of the drama he had witnessed. Occasionally she stopped him with a more detailed question. Moved out of his self-consciousness, he described, more eloquently than he knew, the conflict between the two women at Mrs. Kildair's, and the emotions which had suddenly brought him wide-eyed to the spectacle of the black, turbulent river of despair.

"I can't forget it—it haunts me now," he said, when he had ended with Mrs. Bloodgood's return into the home of her husband. "It makes me see something in life I didn't understand — that I am just beginning to see."

He looked at her. Her face was wet with tears. All at once, astonished, he recalled what he had told.

"What have I done?" he cried, aghast. "I had no right to repeat it. I didn't realize what I was saying!"

"Don't fear," she said, shuddering, and she extended her hands to the fire, as though the recital had frozen her body. "Poor woman — poor, lonely woman!"

He sat down near her, close to the fire, and, stretching out his hand, touched her arm.

"Listen, Nan," he said, so profoundly that she could not mistake the emotion. "It has made a great difference in me. It may be a mood — it may pass; but I hope it won't. It makes me dissatisfied. Look here — I don't want to go on as we have, thrusting and parrying. I don't want it to be just a game. The real feeling in me toward a woman is different — it's one of chivalry, I know. Let's drop all artifices. Let's be honest with each other — good friends; or something else, as it may come."

She considered the depths of the fire a moment, and turned, looking at him dreamily, feeling how much older she was in the knowledge of the doubts of the world than the young, impulsive nature that looked out at her from such honest eyes.

"Will you?" he asked, as she looked away again.

She shook her head, in doubt as to an answer; but the good in her stirred by the good in him expressed itself in the quick pressure of thanks which her hand conveyed to him.

"I am not the least in love," he said quickly. "What I say I say because — oh, I don't know! I'm dissatisfied with myself. This thing has got below my skin. Life's too rotten. I want you to believe in me — in my strength. You *are* sympathetic — *multa sympatica*. I don't know; I hate to think of you fighting alone such a rotten hard fight."

She nodded slowly, understanding perhaps better than he his thought, yet half won to his appeal already.

She took his hand in both of hers, pressing it in emphasis from time to time, not looking at him, staring at something that formed before her eyes.

"No one has ever spoken to me just like this," she said gently. "One thing I would never want to happen, Teddy — I would never want to hurt you! That is why I hesitate — why I am afraid. You are only a great big boy. You won't understand me. I am very selfish — very worldly."

"You are nothing of the sort," he said furiously, withdrawing his hand. "You may think so, but I know you better."

She turned, amused; but her smile left her as she looked in his eyes. To her surprise, a feeling of unease came to her; she felt a new longing — to be for a moment quite childlike and helpless.

"Don't blunder into anything, Teddy," she said, shaking her head, herself a little disturbed. "With some men I would not care. With you, yes, it would make me feel like a criminal to hurt you."

He understood that she was warning him of the futility of expecting to find in her a woman. But if she had calculated, which she had not, on any move surer to arouse him, she could have found no better expedient. The impossibility implied, coupled with the impulsive generosity in her voice, made her a thousand times more desirable. He rose brusquely, and, standing with his back to the fire, looked down at the dramatic face, which the flames lighted with the flare of footlights.

"There are certain things that we must understand together," he said with authority, obeying the instinct which told him that to succeed he must take the upper hand.

Her eyebrows came together in a straight flight.

"I have not hesitated to trust in you — you must in me. Tell me. You have reason to suspect that Mrs. Bloodgood took the ring — at least, the first time?"

She shook her head, but without anger.

"Don't you understand," he said quickly, "that I must know why you acted as you did?"

Still her only answer was a deep-taken breath.

"I swear to you, if Mrs. Bloodgood did take it," he said, "I would not condemn her. On the contrary, I would pity her."

"Why should Mrs. Bloodgood, who has millions, do such a thing?" she said quietly.

"Because, from what I know, Mrs. Bloodgood, who has millions, as the wife of Enos Bloodgood, has not as much money in her pocket as you or I." He stopped. "She took it to have some means of escape, didn't she?"

"No, she did not take it," she answered, but in a tone that brought no conviction.

"You see, I know that you returned to Mrs. Kildair's that night," he said, irritated.

"How did you know?" she said quickly.

"Mrs. Kildair told me — no, that's not true; some one else did."

"Mrs. Kildair herself called me on the telephone and asked me to come," she said slowly.

"And questioned you?"

"Yes."

"As to what you had seen," he said, with a great feeling of relief that should have warned him of his true interest.

"Yes."

"What did you answer?"

She rose and approached him, looking at him with only friendliness.

"If the ring is not restored in two weeks," she said, "then I will tell you what you wish to know."

"You think that, if Mrs. Bloodgood took it, she will now have no use for it," he persisted, seizing the idea.

"I know nothing at all," she answered, emphasizing the "know." "This promise must satisfy you. I only have a suspicion, and I don't want to do an injustice to another — remember that. I have never said it was Mrs.

Bloodgood I suspected. Now I want to talk to you about my own affairs."

He was covered with contrition that he should have forgotten her difficulties.

"Good heavens!" he said hastily. "What have I been thinking of? Please don't think I don't care; I've been in such a whirl ——"

She checked him with a gesture and a smile, motioning him to sit down again.

"Have you had any word?"

She shook her head.

"Of course, it's a terrible day on the Street," he hastened to reply. "Everything's up in the air — they're like a lot of lunatics. Garraboy hasn't had time to think. That oughtn't to alarm you."

"But I left word at his office for him to telephone me, and it is now," she said, glancing at the clock, "an hour and a half since the close."

"There are probably a hundred inquiries of the same sort waiting him," he said, to reassure her. "What are you afraid of?"

"I don't know — and yet I am a little anxious. Suppose he has used my stocks? Such things happen every day."

"The best thing is to find out at once how Garraboy stands — if he's been caught in the drop or not. Then we can take our measures."

"How'll you do that?"

"Call up Bruce Gunther and get him on the trail. May I telephone?"

"Do so."

"He's probably at the club now," he said, taking up the receiver and giving a number. "Yes, he's in. That's lucky. I'll get him in a moment." Then he added irritably: "How the deuce did you ever come to deal with Garraboy?"

"Why, I've known him ever since I came to New York. I wanted to invest some money — I didn't know any one else; and then, he was very — friendly; wanted to make some money for me. That's how it was."

"Hello," said Beecher. "Is that you, Bruce? It's I — Ted."

"Where the deuce have you been?" said the voice at the other end. "I've been trying to get you all over town."

"You have?"

"You bet I have. McKenna's turned up a real clue — wants to see you at once. Pick me up here at the club, will you?"

"All right. But say, Bruce, I want you to get on the job for me, will you?"

"Fire away."

"Find out all you can about Garraboy — you know, the fellow we spoke about. Has he been on the wrong side of the market or not? Understand? It's important."

"I'll do it. Anything else?"

"Yes. A friend of mine has some stocks with him, about twenty thousand worth,— you see the situation,— and she's a little bit worried. Can't get any satisfaction."

"Wants 'em back?"

"Yes. What's the best way to do?"

"Um. Get a transfer to you and we'll call for them to-morrow."

"Of course; see you later."

He put down the telephone and turned gayly to his companion, who was waiting with anxiety.

"That's all right. Bruce will get the information and I'll telephone you this evening. Now, the best way to operate is this." He took out his check-book and wrote a check for twenty thousand dollars to her name. "I'll buy those stocks. Here's my check; give me an acknowledgement for the shares, with an order on Garraboy to deliver."

She looked at him doubtfully, holding the check gingerly in her fingers.

"What's the matter?" he said. "If there's any little difference one way or the other, we can arrange that later."

"Supposing Garraboy has failed and sold my stocks?"

"He hasn't."

"But if he has?"

"That's my risk," he started to say, but checked himself. "Why, of course, then it's off. This is just to give me the power to get them away at once. A man can do what a woman can't."

She was grateful to him for his perception of delicacy.

"On that basis, yes," she said. Then she stopped and looked at him with a whimsical but favoring smile. "As it is, Teddy, what do you know of me, to take even this chance?"

The opening was too direct. She saw it at once, and, to forestall his answer, said more lightly:

"It is a great service. Tell me what to write."

As she was drawing up the paper under his directions, a placid, emotionless woman of forty entered from the rear.

"That Mr. Hargrave is here, Nan dear," she said. "You gave him an appointment, you know."

"Mrs. Tilbury, my companion," said Miss Charters. "Very well; in a moment."

Mrs. Tilbury passed patiently out to deliver the message. Beecher was delighted with the correctness and cold respectability of the chaperon.

"Mr. Hargrave is a young dramatist," said Miss Charters, finishing the document. "He's coming to read some masterpiece to me. He wrote a one-act piece three years ago that was very clever, and now, of course, I can't risk refusing to hear him — he might have a work of genius at last. This is my fourth trial." She put the paper from her impatiently. "I'm sorry."

He was displeased also at this sudden recall of the other life in her, the world of the theater, which crowded the walls with its signed photographs.

"I'll telephone as soon as I know," he said, dissembling his irritation.

She went to the door with him, annoyed also at the interruption.

"I'm coming to-morrow," he said, and he held out his hand with a little defiance.

She did not resent the assumption of right, still introspectively puzzled at the new moods into which she had fallen. And, still pensive, she said:

"Come."

Below, in the ante-room, he sent a look of antagonism and scorn at a young man, a little extravagantly dressed, who carried a portfolio under his arm with a sense, too, of irritation and pride.

CHAPTER XIII

When he had gone into the brisk air of the street, his mental vision returned with the crispness of the night. He was astonished at what he had said and done.

"But I am not in love — not in the least," he repeated. "Then what was it?"

He was quite perplexed at perceiving the astonishing difference her presence and her absence made in his attitude. He repeated to himself quite seriously, with a little wonder, that if he were in danger of falling in love he would be a prey to that disturbing emotion now, absent as well as present.

"I am perfectly calm," he said, flourishing his cane. "Not in the least excited. It's queer."

All the same, he returned to the interview, and recalled the incidents without illusion. He comprehended now what he had not comprehended then, the full significance of his offer of friendship — in fact, that it was not an approach to friendship, but to something very different, and that the relations which had now been established between them were those of confidence and intimacy that lay on the border-line of great emotions.

"It's very odd," he said. "I wished to be honest and open with her, and yet I said what I don't feel — suggested what I have not the least thought of. I'll be hanged if I understand it, unless she has the power to make me believe in emotions that don't exist. Emma Fornez was right: she is the type that provokes you. I must be very careful."

But one thing he did not perceive — that the city no longer oppressed him with its bleak struggle and serried poverty, that he swung lightly over the crisp pavements, breathing the alert and joyous air, that in him the joy of living awakened, as the myriad lights awoke the city of the night, the city rising from the fatigue of labor with its avid zest for pleasure and excitement.

"What is the clue McKenna's got hold of?" he thought eagerly, as the massive, cheery windows of his club came into view across the stirring, care-fleeing homeward rush of the Avenue.

The moment he entered the crowded anteroom, the tragic day returned with redoubled gloom. The death of Majendie oppressed every voice — nothing else was discussed. He found himself caught up in the crowd at the bar, listening with a strange sense of irony to those who touched in haphazard the event which he knew so profoundly. The wildest rumors were current. Majendie had shot himself after the discovery of an enormous shortage in the funds of the Atlantic Trust. The Atlantic Trust had been looted, the effect in Wall Street had been to confirm the wildest rumors, the market would plunge down to-morrow, the awful loss of the day would be surpassed; it was the panic of '93 over again. The inevitable mysterious informant in the crowd arrived with a new rumor: Majendie had tried to escape, had been prevented by detectives who had been shadowing him for days, and had then gone in and shot himself just as the warrant for his arrest arrived. Another gave this version which he had heard — Majendie had not been shot, he had been murdered.

Every one exclaimed at this.

"That's the story in the Associated Press offices," continued the informant obstinately. "A man whose whole fortune was locked up in the Atlantic — a small depositor — got into the house on some pretext, and shot him — crazy, of course. It's not been verified, but that's the story."

"Tell you what I heard," said another, in a low voice, to a group that eddied about him. "It's true he was shot, but he wasn't shot in his own home. He was shot last night in his box at the opera by a man who is as well known as old Fontaine — woman in it, of course, trespassing in married quarters. The whole thing was kept dark — got him out of the box after the crowd went out, and took him home, where he died at midnight. Heard the names in the case, but I was pledged not to repeat them."

Each rumor received a momentary credence, in the excitement of the moment. Some, in defending the personal friend, insisted on melancholia and despondency, citing the example of an uncle who had taken his life after the disgrace of his son. No one spoke the name of Mrs. Bloodgood, waiting the moment of confidences *à trois*. In the stupefaction of the moment, even the personal losses, which had been tremendous, were momentarily forgotten. Gradually inquiries began to be made as to the extent of the panic. Then at once a division was apparent. There was already the party of the shorts, eager and vociferous, staking their last chance of recouping on a wide spread of the devastating drop, which they now as ardently desired as though a thousand homes would not suffer for every point acquired.

Beecher separated himself from these enthusiasts of failure, and passed into the front room, where he was signaled by Gunther, who was in one of the numerous small groups. He found a chair and joined the party, in which were Fontaine, Lynch, and Steve Plunkett. The conversation, which was controversial, continued without interruption.

"Don't be an ass, Ed," said Lynch, with irritation; "nothing can stop the market."

"The Atlantic Trust is as solvent as Gunther & Co.," insisted Fontaine, with a nervous, emphatic gesture. "Every depositor will be paid in full."

"It'll be in the hands of a receiver before the week's over — bet you five to three."

"Possibly; but then ——"

"Moreover, what of the public? What's the public going to do when it hears Majendie's committed suicide? What'll it think? It'll think the whole blamed institution is rotten to the core — looted!"

"Sure," said Plunkett, and he added savagely, his glance lost in the distance: "If I'd known the news an hour earlier, I could have made fifty thousand."

"Why, look at the situation," continued Bo Lynch, excited by his own images. "The Clearing House closed against the Associated Trust and all its allies; runs on banks all over the country; Slade forced to the wall, out of it in a couple of days, perhaps — God knows, another suicide, maybe; two failures up into the hundreds of millions — everything in the country thrown on the market! Look at the sales to-day; they'll be doubled to-morrow. Nothing can hold out against it. The country'll go crazy. I tell you, '93 was nothing to it."

Gunther rose.

"What do you think, Bruce?" said Plunkett anxiously.

"Don't know a thing about it," said Gunther brusquely. "Neither does Eddie or Bo. If you want to gamble, gamble."

He nodded to Beecher, and they moved out together.

"Let's cut out of this den of lunatics," he said. "My machine's here; supposing we run down to McKenna's and get him off for a quiet chop. I've already telephoned."

"He's got some news."

"Yes, but I don't know what it is. Jump in."

"What about Garraboy?"

"Rumor is, he's in heavy. McKenna's looking that up, too."

"I say, Bruce, what do you really think about the situation?" said Beecher, forced to contain his curiosity. "Are we going to the bow-wows?"

"If you ask what I *think*," said Gunther meditatively, "I think it's the devil to pay. Far as I can see, a lot depends on John G. Slade. There's no doubt there's a crowd after his scalp."

"Will they get it?"

"Looks so; but he's got nine lives, they say."

"Where the deuce are we going?" said Beecher, suddenly aware of the swift flight through the now deserted regions of the lower city.

"Down to McKenna's offices."

"As late as this?"

"Guess these days keep him pretty busy."

"Didn't he say anything about his clue?"

"Said he'd traced the history of the stone."

They soon came to a stop in one of the blocks on Broadway within a stone's throw of old Trinity, and, descending, entered a dingy four-story building pinched in among the skyscrapers. At the second flight of worm-eaten stairs, Gunther pushed open a smoky glass door and entered a short ante-chamber inclosed in sanded glass with sliding pigeonholes for observation. Their arrival being expected, they were immediately shown down a contracted hallway studded with doors, to an open room comfortably furnished, with a fire burning in the grate.

"Join you in a moment, gentlemen," said McKenna, nodding around the door of the adjoining room.

Gunther unceremoniously helped himself from an open box of cigars.

"Ted," he said enthusiastically, "why the deuce do the novelists concoct their absurdly stalking detectives, who deduce everything at a glance, with their impossible logical processes? Don't they see the real thing is so much bigger? It's not the fake individual mind that's wonderful; it's the system — this system. A great agency like this is simply an expression of society itself — organized order against unorganized disorder. It's an unending struggle, and the odds are all on one side. By George, what impresses me is the completeness with which society has organized itself, made use of all inventions, telephone — telegraph, the photograph, the press, everything turned on the criminal to run him down. For a hundred detectives employed here, there are a thousand allies, in every trade, in every depot, in every port, along every line of travel. When you think of the agencies that McKenna can stir up by a word, then you begin to realize the significance of the detective in the structure of society."

McKenna, who had heard the last words, entered, vitally alert and physically excited by the joy of unusual labor.

"Now I'm with you," he said, appropriating an easy-chair. "Let's see where we'll begin. Oh, Mr. Beecher, you wanted certain information about that broker Garraboy, didn't you?"

"What have you found out?" said Beecher, with a conscious eagerness that struck both hearers.

"It just so happened I had a line on your man from another direction," said McKenna. "Well, he's hit the market right. What would have happened if this panic hadn't come just right, is another question — a rather interesting question. However, Garraboy's known to have been heavy on the short side, and, from all reports, stands to make a killing."

"Then Miss Charters' stocks are all right?"

"They're all right — yes — now," said McKenna carefully; "but my advice is to get hold of them — P. D. Q. Mr. Garraboy is somewhat of a gambler. Now, here's a bit of history about a certain ruby will interest you," he continued, drawing out a memorandum. In his manner was a little amused self-satisfaction, as of one who relishes the mystification of an outsider. "In the first place, your ruby ring is not worth fifteen thousand."

"No?" said Beecher in amazement

"It's worth considerably more," said the detective, with a grin. "Its last sale was at the price of thirty-two thousand dollars."

"What!" said both young men in chorus.

"Just that."

"But then, why should Mrs. Kildair value it at fifteen?" exclaimed Beecher.

"That's rather an interesting point," said McKenna, "and we'll touch on it later. The stone is as well known in the trade as John L. Sullivan to you and me. It was first sold in New Amsterdam in the year 1852 to a firm of Parisian jewelers. From them it was bought for a well known, rather frisky lady, called La Panthère, by a Count d'Ussac, who ruined himself. La Panthère was killed later by a South American lover and her effects sold at auction. The ruby was bought by the firm of Gaspard Frères, and set in a necklace which was sold to the Princess de Grandlieu. At the fall of the Second Empire, the necklace was broken up and this particular stone went over to England, where it was set in a ring and sold to a young dandy, the Earl of Westmorley, who was killed steeplechasing. A woman named Clara Hauk, an adventuress, had the ring in her possession, and successfully defeated the efforts of the family to regain it. She got into bad water in the '80's and sold it to a South African, who carried it off to the Transvaal with him. It reappeared in the offices of Gaspard Frères in 1891 on the finger of a young Austrian woman who sold it for twenty-two thousand dollars and disappeared without giving her name. An Italian, the Marchese di Rosso, bought it for a wedding present to his daughter, who kept it until 1900, when she pledged it to pay the gambling debts of her husband. It was then brought to this country by the wife of a Western rancher, who sold it five years later to Sontag & Co. The last sale known was just two months ago."

"Two months?" said Beecher, craning forward.

"The price, as I said, was thirty-two thousand, and the purchaser was a certain gentleman very much before the public now — John G. Slade."

This announcement was so entirely unexpected that it left the two young men staring at each other, absolutely incapable of speech.

"But then," said Gunther, the first to recover, "the ring was given her by Slade!"

"At a cost of thirty-two thousand," said the detective in a quick, businesslike tone.

"You are sure?"

"As positive as any one can be. There are only three other rings ——"

"That's why she wanted to keep it quiet," exclaimed Beecher, rousing himself from his stupor. The whole machination of Mrs. Kildair became comprehensible to him on the instant. "Now I see!"

"Precisely," said McKenna. "Of course there is a chance that Slade did not give her the ring; that I'll know to-morrow."

"How?"

"Make an inquiry — for a supposed purchaser, of course; find out if the ring is still at Slade's."

"It's useless," said Beecher firmly. "This explains everything. That's why she acted so strangely" — he checked himself. "I saw Mrs. Kildair — took lunch with her — to-day ——"

"Did you find out whom she employed?" said McKenna quietly.

Beecher opened his lips to answer in the affirmative, and stopped abruptly. For the first time, he realized that Mrs. Kildair had taken back the address. He rose nervously, frowning at the stupidity he would be forced to disclose.

"By Jove, I am an ass!" he said, dropping his glance; and he related the scene in which Mrs. Kildair had first given him the address and then taken it away.

"It's not important, Mr. Beecher," said the detective pensively, his mind working behind the recital. "She didn't give you the right address."

"How do you know?" said Beecher, turning.

"Because she recovered the paper as soon as she found out you were employing me," he answered; but his mind was still elsewhere. He took out a pencil and began tapping his memorandum with quick, nervous jots. "Her mind worked pretty quick," he said.

"Why do you want to know her detectives?" said Gunther.

"You see, the case is complicated," said McKenna, rousing himself. "I won't go into her relations with Slade just now, but it's quite evident to any one they were such that Mrs. Kildair prefers to lose the ring rather than to have it discovered how it came to her. See?"

"I see," said Gunther.

Beecher, silent, was turning over in his mind all the incidents of Slade's and Mrs. Kildair's conduct, striving to reach some explanation but the natural one that forced itself on him.

"That's why," continued McKenna, "I'd like to know, first, if the detectives are straight — can be depended upon; second, if they were told to make a search; and, third, if they were told *not* to find the ring."

"But why not?"

"Because, Mr. Gunther, whoever took that ring the second time didn't take it on impulse or without a plan; whoever took it *probably* — I don't say certainly — knew enough of its history to know that Slade gave it to her, and reckoned on the fact that she would not dare to make it public. See?"

The corners of his eyes contracted suddenly, as though through the movement of propelling forward the quick, decisive glance.

"Then you think," said Beecher slowly, "that she is ——"

"Look here, Mr. Beecher," said the detective quickly, "there is one thing no human being can ever say offhand; what says the Bible — 'the way of a man with a maid' — well, make that woman in general. You don't know, and I don't know, what the situation is right there, and we may *never* know. All the same, we're now started on solid ground; it may lead to something, and it may not, but what I want to know before we get much further is who and how many there that night knew or guessed Slade gave her the ring."

"Of course," said Gunther. "But how ——"

"By patience and by running down every alley till we find it is an alley," said McKenna. "That's one thing to keep in mind, and let's put it this way. Was there any one there that night who had to have money quick, and who knew the fact of Slade's giving the ring would tie Mrs. Kildair's hands? Now, if that condition existed, we're on a strong motive."

"You don't consider that the only lead," said Beecher, convinced as he was of the probability of Mrs. Bloodgood's participation.

"Lord, no. Here's one other point to work on, Mr. Beecher. What's the situation to-day between Slade and Mrs. Kildair? Has there been any quarrel — say within the last ten days?"

"I don't think so; and yet —" Beecher stopped, remembering Mrs. Kildair's curious request for him to outstay the promoter. "What if there was?"

"Slade's a remarkable character," said McKenna, smiling. "Just how remarkable a few people will learn shortly. If he had quarreled or she's been trying to trick him — just like him to take the ring the second time."

"By George!" said Gunther. "Why not?"

"That's only something to be kept in the background," said McKenna, rising. He turned to Beecher, considering him profoundly.

"Sorry you told Mrs. Kildair I was on the case," he said.

Beecher blushed at the memory of the way in which he had been brought to disclose the information, and the confusion all at once revealed to the detective the probable means she had taken.

At this moment the door opened and a voice called him:

"Telephone, sir — personal."

When the detective had left, Beecher and Gunther looked at each other in amazement in which a curious doubt was beginning to form.

"Why the deuce should Slade give her the ring, Ted?" said Gunther abruptly.

"I don't know," Beecher answered, perplexed. "I know what you think — that's natural; but I don't believe it. She's deeper than that — that is, I think so."

But he ended perplexed, contracting his eyebrows, nervously jerking at a button on his coat.

McKenna reëntered, and on his face was a smile of anticipation and mischief.

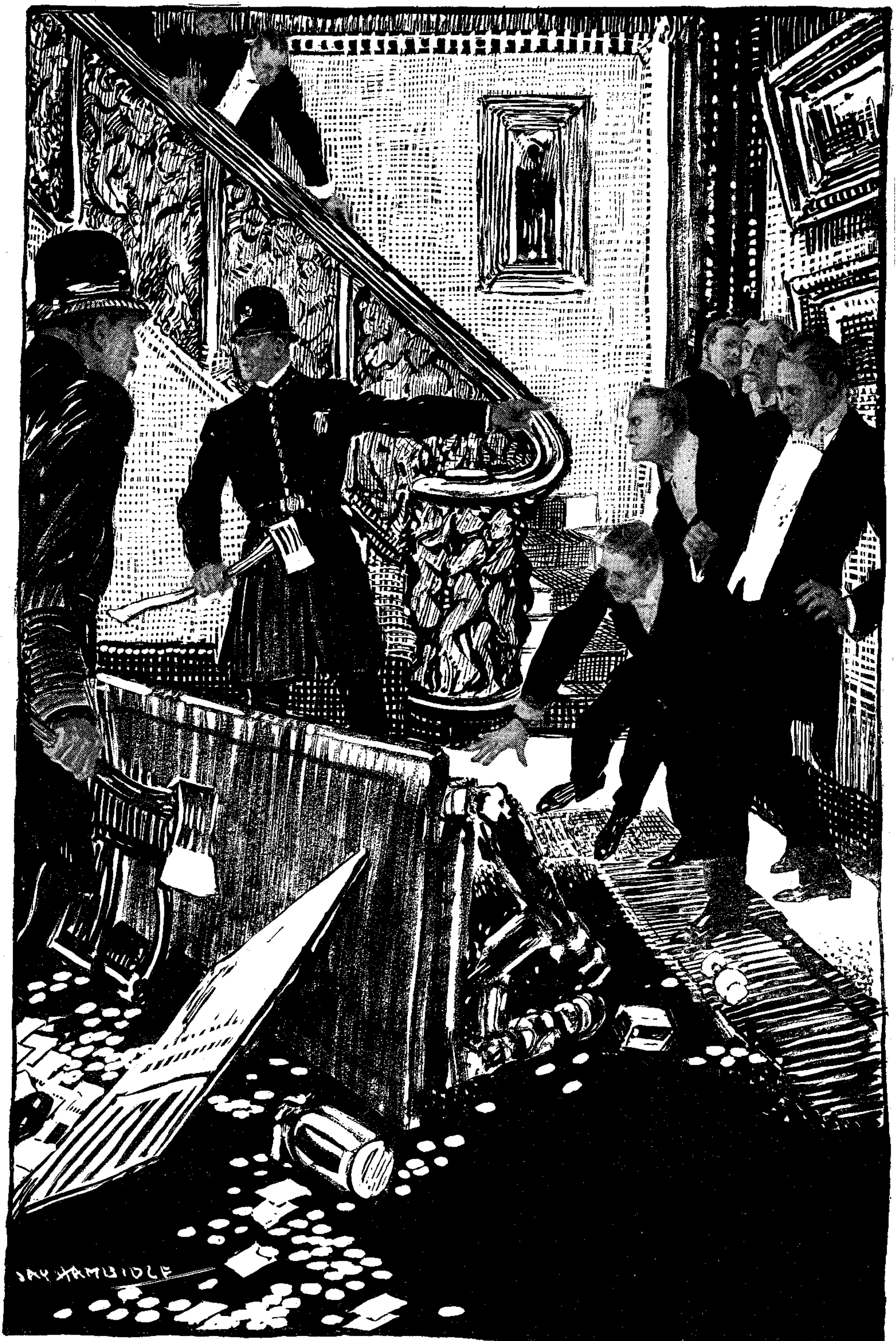
"Some one called me up just then," he said shortly — "some one I've been expecting to call me up. Guess who?"

"Slade," said Gunther, startled.

"Mrs. Kildair," said Beecher.

"Mrs. Kildair is right," said McKenna. "I'm to see her to-night." And he added meditatively, "It ought to be an interesting little chat."

TO BE CONTINUED


JAY HAMBIDGE

"A COUPLE OF MY MEN WENT AT THE $100,000 TAPESTRIES AND PICTURES. IN THIRTY MINUTES THEY HAD DESTROYED $30,000 WORTH"

THE DIARY OF A NEW YORK POLICEMAN

BY

ALFRED HENRY LEWIS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAY HAMBIDGE

This is Mr. Lewis's second story of the progress of a crooked officer on the New York police force, rehearsing actual experiences as related to the writer.

It is a cynical picture of the daring and successful "strong-arm" methods used in subduing a precinct to a thorough system of graft collection.

I HAD a bad name in the department, I'm willing to admit. I was rated as a trouble-maker, and was unpopular accordingly. But there was this much to be said. I'd only been on the force a few months, you might say, when they all saw I was a good man to keep their hands off. That Headquarters bunch hated me worse every time they took a crack at me and missed me; but they'd found out at last they'd better let me alone.

"What's the use of breaking him?" said my old friend, the chief of detectives. "Taking his badge away would simply make him worse. In that case he'd pal in with the Parkhursts or some such incorporated nuisance, and go to squawking for fair."

So that much was gained; I was sure of not being jobbed off the force. And right after that things broke my way at last. By pure accident I got my turn at the graft. It was a queer business, you may think, but it'll show you how things really happen inside the department.

There was a captain I came to know, named Muggins — Muggs, 'most everybody called him. Now, this Muggs was given to playing the ponies. Likewise, I myself suffered from the same amiable weakness. We often met in some pool-room where we'd gone to get down our bets. Muggs' station-house was in Forty-seventh Street. One afternoon we ran against each other in a pool-room which was among the ornaments of Muggs' precinct.

Muggs was having trouble with his inspector, who accused him of holding out on the graft. The inspector was laying for a chance to put Muggs in wrong, and had been having him tailed by a couple of his plain-clothes dicks. They must have 'phoned the inspector that now was the time.

It certainly looked that way; for, as Muggs and I sat idly chatting with the two people who kept the pool-room, the inspector's myrmidons came thundering at the door. He was pulling the place, with the thought of catching Muggs in the incriminating net of that pull. The papers would get it, of course, and it would spell the police end for poor Muggs.

My Rescue of Captain Muggs

As the axes hit the ice-box door, Muggs turned as pale as a candle.

"It's the inspector," he cried. "I'm lost!"

"Not on your life!" I returned.

With that, I collared one of the pool-room keepers whom we'd been talking to, and thrust him into Muggs' fingers. "Neck him!" I roared, as I made a reach for the other owner.

Fastening my five fingers in the collar of number two, I shouted cheerfully to the cohorts of the inspector:

"Smash in the door, boys; we've got 'em!"

Muggs saw the point; the pool-room keeper saw the point; every man most nobly played his part. Muggs and I opened the ice-box door from the inside, and rode with the inspector to Muggs' station, where we triumphantly paraded our prisoners. It saved Muggs, and he knew it. As for the baffled inspector, he nearly had an apoplectic fit.

"I'd been after that pool-room for weeks," explained Muggs, as, with a leer, he began telling the inspector all about it, "and yesterday

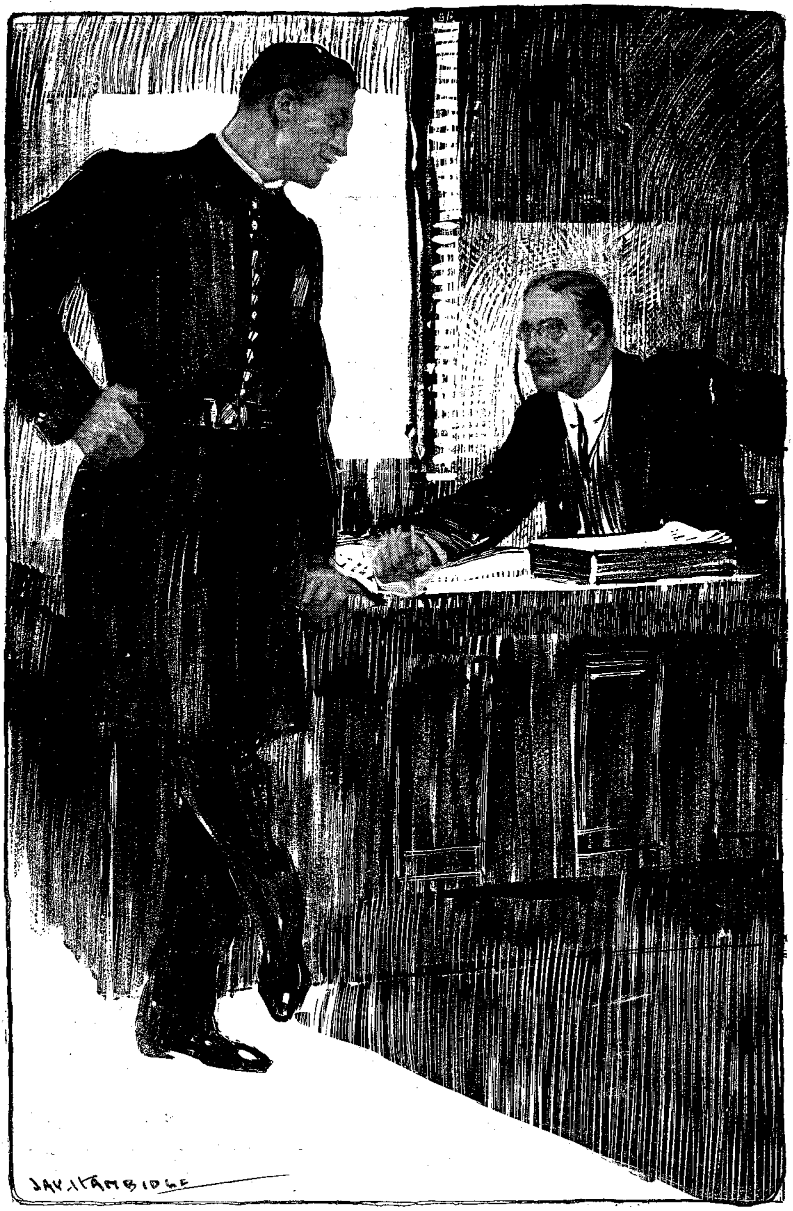
I got 'em right. He"— pointing to me —"happened along in the nick of time, and, although he's off duty and don't belong in my precinct, I requisitioned him to help make the collar."

"Yes," answered the inspector, giving me a bitter look. "It's a pity about him! I believe you, though, when you say he happened along in the nick of time!"

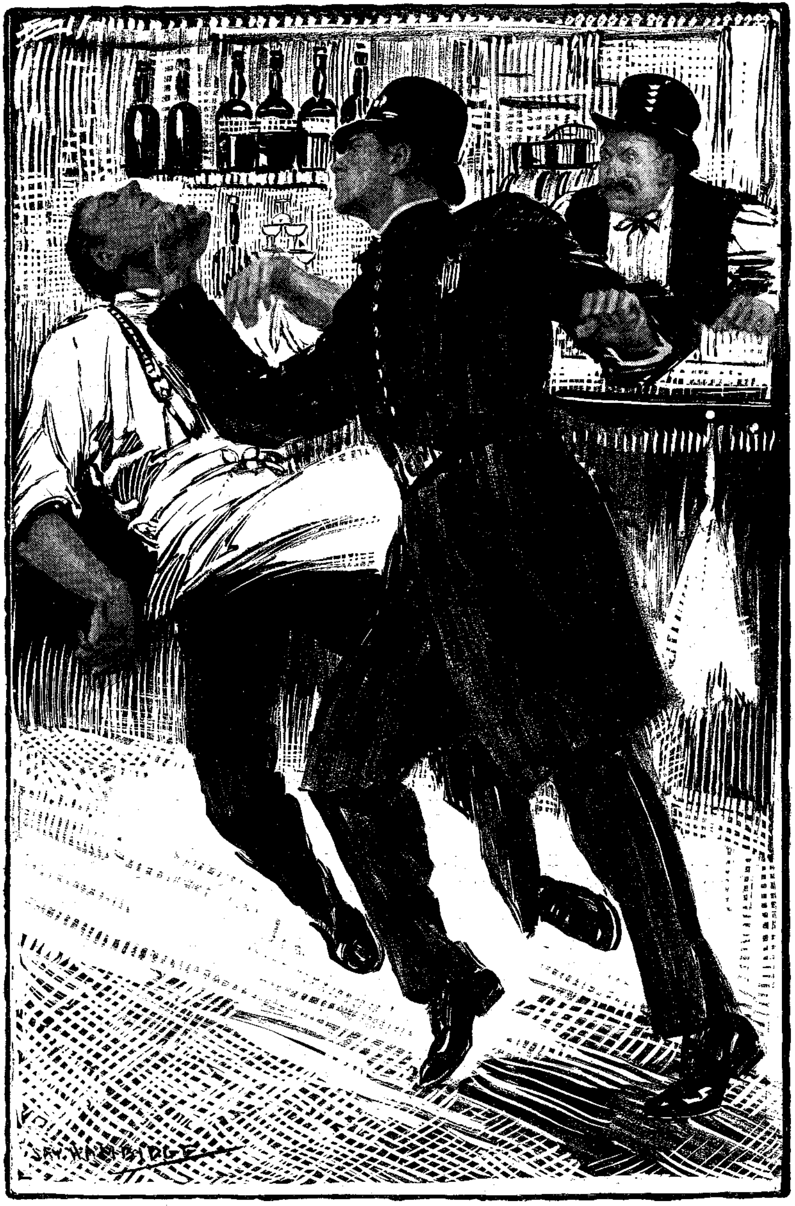
They all knew me, you see, by this time; and, whatever they thought, they didn't exactly pick me for a boob.

But, naturally, after that Muggs liked me.

Not long afterwards that Hebron thing broke. Hebron was a politician, and incidentally kept a prosperous saloon in one of the fattest precincts of the town. For reasons sufficient unto



"MY ENEMY, THE COMMISSIONER, SENT FOR ME. 'I ALWAYS SAID YOU WERE AS CUNNING AS A PET FOX,' HE REMARKED. 'SOME DAY I MAY NEED A FOX MYSELF'" himself, Hebron pushed a button with Headquarters and caused the captain of that fat precinct to be transferred. Then Hebron got gay and talked his head off. He wanted everybody to understand that he "owned the commissioner." The commissioner didn't rejoice in the advertisement which Hebron was giving him; it came to me straight that he was sore as a pup about it.



"ONE OF THE BARKEEPS THOUGHT HE'D PUT UP A FIGHT, BUT I CAN HIT LIKE THE KICK OF A PONY. 'WHO'LL BE THE NEXT TO START SOMETHING?' I ASKED"

But he had to find a new man for the place, just the same, and who did he pull out of the pack but my old friend Muggs! It was only a few days after that the commissioner sent word to Muggs and told him so. Could anybody blame Muggs for feeling joyous? By conservative estimate, the over-all graft of that fattest precinct wasn't a splinter under a plethoric

$50,000 a month. With Headquarters taken care of, and after the inspector "had been given his," the least that Muggs would receive, as captain, would be a monthly $20,000. Pretty tidy! Muggs' salary as captain, between New Year's and New Year's, was $2,750. The prospect of swelling this by $240,000 came with a curling sense of comfort to Muggs' hungry heart.

And yet, Muggs showed himself a man. Even in the radiant thick of all this promised prosperity, he did not forget his debt to me. Muggs sent for me, and, after gripping my hand until a drop of blood as big as a grape oozed out from beneath each nail, he related his good fortune.

"And," concluded Muggs, "you must be my wardman. As my collector you'll get your twenty per cent. The worst that can happen to you is $5,000 a month."

A Wardman for Two Weeks

Muggs was ordered to Mulberry Street to receive his official notification. When I next saw him, his face was a message of death.

"I'm sorry," he said, shaking a doleful head; "but the commish won't stand for you."

"Tell me about it," I urged.

"It wasn't much, but it was enough. After he makes the transfer, the commish asks, 'And now, who'll you appoint as your wardman?' I says it's fixed for you. With that he breaks out.

"'Muggs,' he says, 'that man won't do. He's too smart for you! He's cunning as a pet fox! I won't let you have him, Muggs.'

"There he stuck like a cork in a bottle. I argued for half an hour, but it's no use; he simply wouldn't have you. Finally I made a proposition.

"'Give him to me for two weeks,' I says. 'I've promised him; and that'll let me keep my word.'

"'Muggs,' he replies, 'I'm afraid. You don't know what that fellow won't do in two weeks.'

"But I swung and rattled with him, and at last he let me have my way. You're to be wardman for two weeks.

"Can you do anything good for yourself in two weeks?" asked Muggs.

Could I do anything in two weeks? I should say not! Before Muggs was half through, the whole thing flashed across me.

This time it was Muggs' blood that came oozing out from beneath his nails.

"It's a cinch," I said, wringing his fingers. "Two weeks? In three days I'll fix your commissioner so he can't bat an eye or wag an ear against the combination without committing suicide."

I Extend My Term of Office

So Muggs and I took over the fattest precinct according to schedule; and I took my first official act by going into executive session with my brother in arms, the outgoing wardman, who was about to follow the fortunes of his fallen chief to the wild clam-flats on the other side of Staten Island.

He was a good fellow; and we sat down over a glass of beer, and he wised me up on the graft, and gave me a typewritten list of the names and addresses in the precinct, together with the monthly tax each one had to stand for.

Most of them were peaceable enough — they'd fetch in their bundle each month as pretty as trained dogs. There were only three or four on the whole muster-roll who were likely to duck or dodge or put up a battle.

The worst of these was the biggest of the lot — one of the biggest in the whole town, a swell gambler we'll call Baden. The fact was, one of the inspectors owned a piece in his game; and Baden figured no mere captain would have the nerve to slough him in.

"To give it to you straight," said the retiring wardman, "you'll have a run-in with this stiff, sure. We haven't had a dollar from him for four months; and only yesterday I crossed up with him, and he sent word to you and Muggs you needn't come around; he wouldn't cough up for a splinter — that he'd like to see you pull him in."

So, having given me all he had, my friend the old wardman heads for the dense mosquitoes, and leaves me with my two weeks before me.

Two weeks — there was nothing to it! Hebron the politician was still hollering his head off about the commissioner, and the more he talked the sorer that leading citizen got. He was a thin-skinned person, in the first place, that commissioner, who didn't care about being led around in chains before the populace. In the second place, the thing was likely to cost him his job.

You see, the Mayor who had appointed him happened to be a suspicious old party — very ambitious, and jealous of everybody about him. He was crazy to be renominated and elected; and, once he got the idea into his narrow old noodle that his police commissioner was making deals with the politician over his head, he'd see a rival in the horizon and come down on the commissioner for his resignation like a pan of milk from a top shelf.

The thing was a cinch. Having worked it all out, I proceeded, as the lawyers say, in the following manner — to wit: The third night I was in this precinct, I walked into Hebron's place at one-thirty o'clock in the morning, and offhand pinched him and his three barkeeps for violating the excise law by keeping open after hours. Incidentally, I blacked the eye of one of the barkeeps who, acting on Hebron's orders to tear into me, thought he'd put up a fight. I've got the length and reach and nearly the science of Corbett, and can hit like the kick of a pony. I cut loose only one wallop, but that was a peach. It caught my warlike barkeep in the jaw, and left him the saddest-looking drink-juggler who'd been seen about those four corners for some time.

After I'd punched the lively barkeep, I pulled my blackjack.

"Who'll be the next to start something?" I said.

At this, my four prisoners, Hebron with the rest, became peaceful as four pups in a basket.

Hebron gave bail for himself and his bottle-tossers, and set the case a week away. He wanted time to go to his friend, the commissioner, and gather in my scalp. Later I got the story from the inside — from the commissioner's own private secretary, in fact.

Mr. Hebron Travels in a Circle

It seems that Hebron had no sooner got his red nose inside Headquarters door when the commissioner took the play away from him. Before he could so much as open his mouth, the commissioner was after him.

"I'm glad you got what you did," he said. "My only regret is that it wasn't your jaw instead of the barkeeper's that was punched."

"See here!" roared Hebron. "I don't understand. You send a crazy wardman into my precinct, who in the first seventy-two hours pinches me and slugs one of my bar-boys. If that's the best I can get, I want to know it!"

"It isn't the worst you can get — believe me! Can't you see what you've done?"

"See what I've done? I ain't done nothing."

"Do you call it nothing to go bragging and boasting, all over the town, that you owned me, and had had that captain removed? That's where the whole trouble springs from. I only gave Muggins this wardman for two weeks; then he was to go. I told him, too, that the fellow was as cunning as a pet fox, and now he's proved it. He arrests your joint the first move he makes — a play which'll save him from removal."

"Save him?" cried Hebron, in utter astonishment. "This gazebo jumps into my saloon, collars me and all hands, and you set there and tell me it saves him! You make me tired! Are you nutty?"

"Whether the news tires you or not, it's right. Think it over. Suppose I remove him as I'd arranged: what'll people say?— the Mayor, for example? The first thing they'll do will be to take your brag at face value. They'll say that you own me and own the police, and can come into Mulberry Street and stand things on their head whenever you feel like it. That don't wash. I've got to look out for myself. The short cut now is for you to shut up, plead guilty, and pay a fine. As for my fox of a wardman, he's got me jammed — just exactly as he figured to. I'll have to leave him there, now, until people have time to forget."

Hebron by this time was in a haze; he couldn't get the matter through his thick, whiskey-soaked head. "Commissioner," he said, "I don't see through this. You've got me walkin' in a circle."

"It's as plain as a pike-staff. The Mayor's already heard that you got me to transfer that captain. It's been in every paper how the new wardman arrested you. Now, if I remove him, what'll that suspicious old dotard of a Mayor think? The long and short of it is, you'll have to plead guilty and take your medicine. Also, that wardman'll have to stay, for the time being at least."

Hebron gulped his wrath and paid a fine. At that, he wasn't through. I had made up my mind from the jump to go the route with Hebron, and had taken steps with the excise board in Albany to have his license revoked. He was a Tammany politician, but that only went for the town. The Republicans had the State, and the excise people were Republicans. It would be duck soup to them to get Hebron. Upon my charges, they laid for him, and it cost him an even $1,000 — which went where it would do the most good — to save his papers.

Hebron took a tumble, and came seeking my friendship. Certainly I became Hebron's friend — for another $1,000. Hebron had come through with a thousand for the excise board, and I couldn't see why he should get off with any less for me and Muggs.

The $1,000?

My piece of it was $200, the regular twenty per cent. Muggs took the $800.

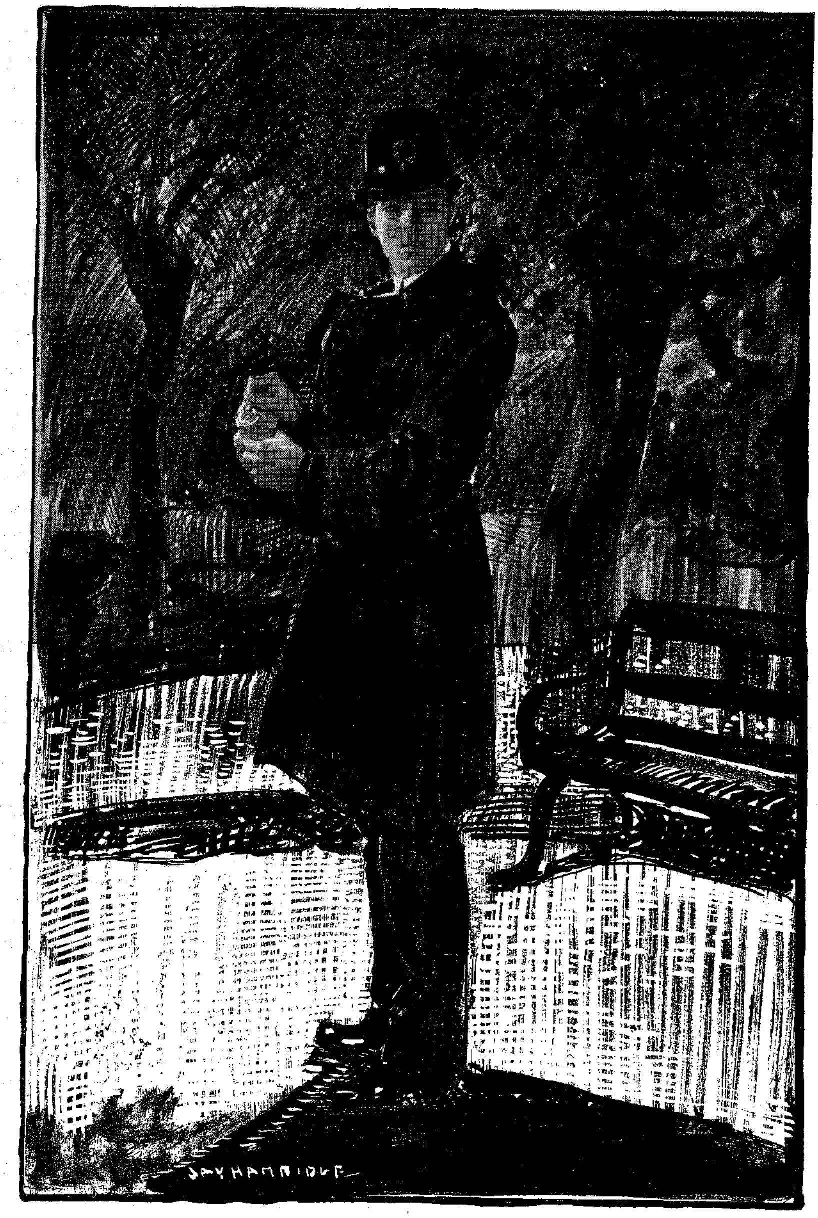
That $200 wasn't all I got, however. I was down to Headquarters one day, and the commissioner sent for me.

"I merely wanted to compliment you," he said, with a sly look. "Some day I myself may need a fox. In that case, I'll know where to find one."

He stretched out his hand. It was on the level, too — that handshake.

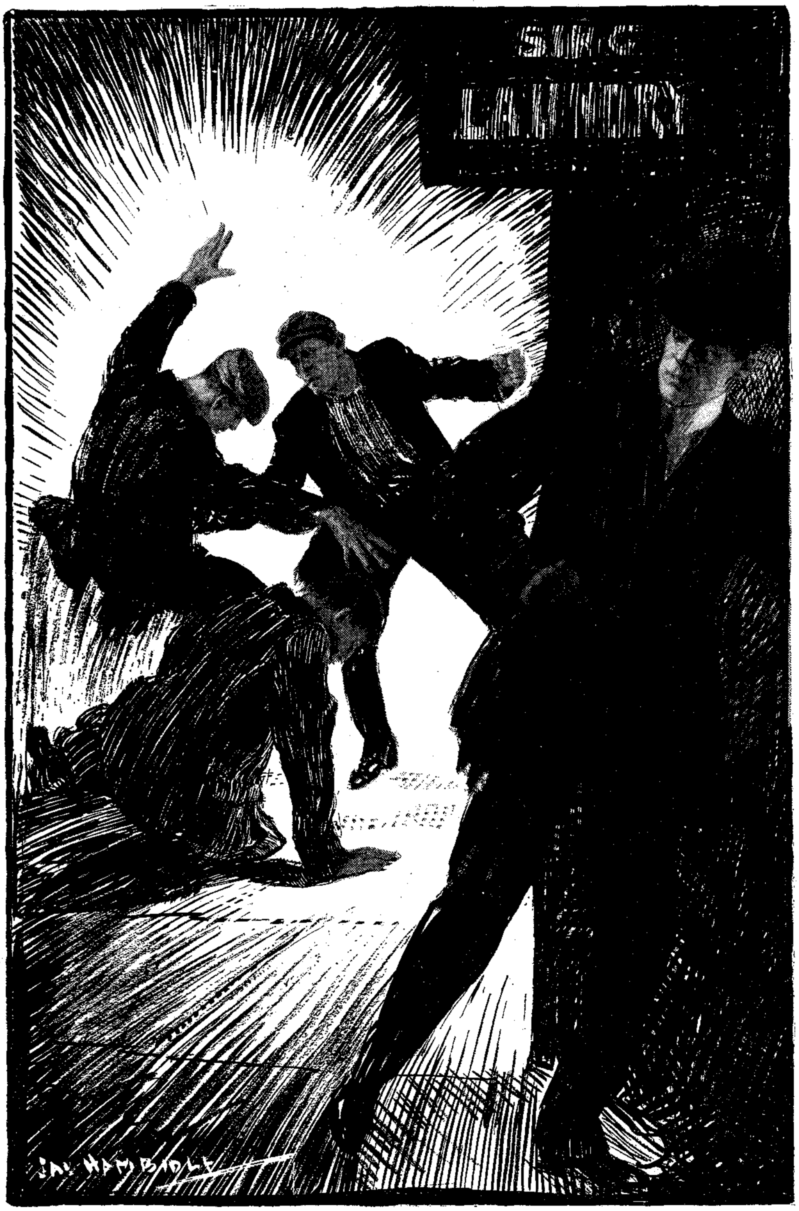
So I was hitched on solid: Muggs' collector — so long as Muggs lasted.

Muggs was all right, too. After that first move he put the precinct entirely into my hands; I could do whatever I saw fit.



"THEY ALWAYS SLIPPED ME THE MONEY IN CENTRAL PARK OR SOME OTHER PLACE WHERE I COULD SEE FOR TWO HUNDRED FEET IN ALL DIRECTIONS"

As a beginning I did the usual thing done whenever a new captain comes into a precinct like that. I ordered everything — gambling-rooms, disorderly houses, opium dens, and all — closed. That's the way we have of separating the graft sheep from the graft goats. The goats won't close — commonly, however, they are very few. This gives you a chance to make pulls, and a reasonable number of pulls are necessary to a wardman's safety. You've got to show the papers and the public that you're working, and "keeping your precinct clean." Certainly it's claptrap; but the town has been run on claptrap for a hundred years, and is running on claptrap now.



"SUPPOSE I WAS COLLARED AND SEARCHED — HOW WAS I TO EXPLAIN THAT $18,000 IN MY POCKETS? 'MAKE YOUR GET-AWAY,' JIMMY WHISPERED; 'I'LL TAKE HIM'"

Aside from those sheep-and-goat discoveries, that particular closing "order" owned another and a golden side. Once the places were closed, I made them come up with from $5 to $500 to open again. This had nothing to do with their monthly payments, which began the moment the places reopened. That "order" to close, and the subsequent permission to open, netted Muggs and myself a bundle the size of a roll of carpet, and gave us a nice little bank balance from the start. Even if the commissioner had stuck to that two weeks' limit, as originally fixed for me, I would have just the same carried off a pocketful of the long green.

And then, again, it brought me to my next move. It gave me my chance to take up the case of the chesty Mr. Gambler Baden, nursing a high rebellious mood because a big inspector had a piece of his gambling-house. Mr. Gambler Baden felt — like some faro-bank Alexander Selkirk — that he was out of humanity's reach. I figured — and I might add hoped — when I sent out the word to "close" that Mr. Gambler Baden would defy me. He had said that "he'd like to see me pull him," and I had been red-hot to accommodate him ever since I'd heard of it.

Baden's place was a top-notcher. What with pictures and statues and tapestries, that snare of his had cost him an even $100,000. But the very fact that it was a big place, as well as several other "reasons," made it especially worth while to pull him. It would show at once that I was running the precinct. I intended to so manage, also, that after I'd got through with Baden no one would so much as dream of giving me a battle. Gamblers are like Missourians — you have to show 'em; and what I planned doing to the chesty Mr. Baden would not only show 'em but convince 'em. I didn't tell Muggs. He was one of your soft-baked students; Baden would look over-big to him, and I was afraid he'd get cold feet.

As a starter, I made a meet with Baden. He was rough and high, as I knew he would be. After letting him bullyrag me to his soul's content, I started to leave with — apparently — my tail between my legs.

"Where do you get off," he roared after me — it was perhaps his mildest utterance —"to go givin' me a talk? If you and Muggs go to monkeyin' with me, you'll get it where the baby wore the beads."

"What's the use of making such cracks as that?" said I, pausing a moment, but all the time as meek as Moses. "There's no call for any rough talk; there's no money in it."

"That'll do you, now!" he cried, waving his hand and dismissing me with what he meant should be a kingly gesture. "That'll do you! Don't forget you ain't punching one of Hebron's barkeeps! You're up against *me*."

There was a big "M" went with that "me," I could see that; but I let him get by with it, and skulked away as though he had me buffaloed to a standstill.

Following my interview, I gave him three days to get the news of his victory spread about the precinct. I knew he'd take a day off to talk about it; for he was as ready to brag as Hebron.

On the third night, about ten o'clock,— I aimed to give the morning papers a chance,— when his patrons were standing three deep about his roulette-wheels and faro layouts, I put an armful of sledges, pinch-bars, and a hydraulic jack into an auto-car, called six of Muggs' plain-clothes men to my back, and issued forth. No one knew where I was going — *I wasn't taking any chances on a tip-off.* The first notion that any of them had that I was out for Baden, came when I dumped them and the tools at Baden's door, and told them to get busy.

Calling Mr. Baden with a Jack

The joint had been in its time one of your old-fashioned, respectable brownstone residences, and the only outside change Baden had instituted was a series of three doors. There were the ordinary wood street doors, a wickerwork steel door, and last of all an ice-box door. What with sledges and pinch-bars, we went through the outer, and next the wickerwork steel door, like the grace of heaven through a camp meeting. It wasn't exercise enough to warm us up. The ice-box door might have made us a little trouble, but it was there my hydraulic jack came in. I brought that mighty engine to bear — give it a purchase and it would have lifted the house itself — and Mr. Gambler Baden's famous ice-box obstruction exhibited no more holding power than a politician's promise. It was forced from its hinges, and the next moment we went tumbling into the hall.

It was plain sailing after that; or it would have been if it hadn't been for Baden himself. He was weak-minded enough to plant himself squarely in my way. He was standing at the foot of the stairs that led to the gambling-room on the third floor.

Baden didn't know it, but he was playing the game precisely as I all along had hoped he would. As I bore down upon him, he slid his hand under his coat-tails. I didn't believe he meant it, for I didn't credit him with having the nerve. None the less, I had my own gun out in an instant.

"Don't spring that artillery," I said; "if you do I'll make you eat it, butt and barrel."

Baden's hand came away empty, his face as pale as a candle. Before he could say a word, I had smashed him over the head with my own pistol and laid him out.

My gun wasn't as light as a feather, being a Colt's .38, and, although I handed Baden but the single blow, it cut a most satisfactory gash in his head.

"Pick him up and dump him in the patrol-wagon," I said to one of my men.

Ten minutes later, with a towel on his head, Baden and four of his dealers were taking a ride down Broadway. I didn't arrest the players;

I merely took their names and told them to beat it, which they freely did. My men carted out four wagon-loads of tables, chips, and other gambling tools as evidence, and the famous Baden raid was over.

"Muggs, the Honest Cop"

Not altogether, at that; for, at a wink from me, a couple of my people,— as eager to destroy things as a brace of apes,— went at the pictures, tapestries, and furniture generally, and what they did to 'em was a sin! In thirty minutes they had scrap-heaped the entire joint — with Baden at the station-house, 'phoning for bail!

Every paper in town had half a page about it in the morning. They ran races with each other, telling how "Muggs, the Honest Cop," and his no less honest wardman had set out heroically to put the morals of the precinct in repair. That pull brought Baden face to face with himself, and it didn't take him long to discover that he was a foot shorter in the reach than he'd supposed. Inside of forty-eight hours his friends were begging me for a let-up.

Even his inspector partner was among these peace-makers. To make it more binding, the latter brought my own inspector along.

"Better soften up a trifle," urged my inspector; "Baden'll be good."

"But will he?" I replied. "To hear him the other day, you'd think he owned you and me and Muggs, and everything else between here and the back fence."

"He's got over that!"

"Your men," interjected Baden's inspector partner, indignantly, "destroyed $30,000 worth of pictures and tapestries."

"Is that all?" I retorted. "And I gave them men express instructions not to let up until they were sure they'd made it six figures! I'll can some of them babies for taking life too easy and scamping their work."

Baden's inspector partner wheeled on his heel and walked away. All the same, I'd got him as thoroughly bluffed as I had Baden himself. Baden's lawyer came chasing.

"Don't talk to me," I said; "talk to the judge."

"The judge is all right," he replied, "unless you go into court and unload a ton of testimony on him. All he asks is an opening to let Baden down easy, and he'll do it. It's he who suggested that I see you."

"We'll make it short and sweet," I said. "Tell Baden it'll cost him $5,000."

"But he's going to pay his $550 assessment every month; he's willing to do that."

"Tell him he'll have to stretch his willingness to cover an extra $5,000."

"But what's that for?" the lawyer almost wailed.

"That's a fine," I returned, with a vinegar grin, "for slandering me and Muggs, and calling us names."

The lawyer groaned, but came back with the $5,000. And, by the time that Baden story had soaked in, that precinct was eating out of my hand.

An Embarrassment of Riches

Now, then, I had them started all right. But I wasn't boob enough to think there wouldn't be some try at a come-back, especially from a guy like Hebron. So I had my eye peeled.

I guess, by this time, I don't have to tell you that a wardman has got to keep awake. There's dozens of different influences after him. Sometimes it's Headquarters, again it's the papers, or the preachers, or the anti-vice societies; and every now and then some gambler or politician may work a frame-up on you.

Those first weeks I moved cautiously. A cat couldn't have trod softer. But, for all that, they nearly got me. I have to laugh when I think of it; it was certainly a silky frame-up.

One day, when I had been there about two months, I'd just stepped out of a place where I'd made a meet with a party representing one of my gambling-houses. It was a day of big collections. I had some $18,000 odd in my clothes.

All at once, slam! a short, thick, ugly-looking individual came full tilt into my ribs with his elbow. It took the wind all out of me.

Being naturally a scrapper, my blood was up in a second. But before I could get breath enough to say what was on my mind, my tough friend started in on me. He accused me of bumping into him; and the things he called me and the language he used would have killed an acre of grass. In fact, he overplayed his game; for right away it broke upon me, like a flood of sunlight, that I was being jobbed. There I stood, with $18,000 more or less in my pockets, and this tough citizen trying to get into a fight with me and have us both collared!

Suppose I was collared — and searched? And the search was bound to come off. How would I explain that $18,000 — I, a cheap copper? I was in a hole for sure, and knew it. My only show was to kiss my way through. Meanwhile, my tough friend stood there, thinking up new names to call me.

I stood there, trying to figure out how I was to shake him, and him refusing to let go. Believe me, I was sweating blood for fair!

Of a sudden, a voice spoke up at my elbow: "What's wrong?"

Jimmy the Nailer to the Rescue

Talk of Lucknow and "The Campbells are coming!" There was Jimmy the Nailer, one of my old boxing partners in those earlier West Side days. His tones broke on my harassed ears like a tune of music.

My reply sprung from just instinct. "Take him, Jimmy," I whispered.

It is among the best things about our city-bred lads that they instantly grasp a situation. Like a flash, Jimmy knew that, for some good reason other than a want of heart or reach, it was inconvenient for me to go to the sidewalk with my name-calling friend. Instantly, upon the old effective one-two principle, Jimmy's left shot to the jaw, while his right found the stomach. It was like a bolt from the blue, and bit off my obstreperous friend's flow of eloquence in the muddy middle of a word. Down he went in heaps, kicking and gasping, but out of business for half an hour to come.

"Make your get-away!" said Jimmy to me in a brisk aside, as he went after the fallen one.

Jimmy's advice was so good that I had begun acting on it before it was given, and I oozed out at the rear of the crowd just as a brace of harness bulls pushed in. They needed an ambulance for the enemy.

The next day, when the case came up in court, we fixed it all right for my friend Jimmy the Nailer. The officers that made the collar were Muggs' men, and it only took a wink to set them telling it Jimmy's way in court. The voluble foe got necked for a "neddy,"—which is a ten-dollar gold piece, if you care to know,—while Jimmy was turned loose.

As he came out of the court-room, I was planted at the door to slip him a couple of hundred. There's nothing lost by being freehanded, and Jimmy might again work in handy.

"For the love of Mike!" he said, as his five hooks closed round the bills. Then he added: "Say, put me on your regular staff. I'll punch ginks year in, year out, for a tenth the money."

I thanked the saints for squeezing out of that jam,—by pure bull luck, you might say,—and I pulled every wire to get back of that frame-up and satisfy myself who was in it. It was Baden and his inspector all right. They denied it; but I knew. But that was the last. They knew I was wise, for one thing; for another, I had fixed myself so it took a wise boy to get to me. It took me three months to do it, but by that time I'd fixed up things right. I'd arranged matters there so that I personally didn't do any collecting at all. I picked out one special man — not a copper, but a rank outsider — to go round and get the money for every kind of graft: a man for the gamblers, a man for the disorderly houses, a man for the pipe-joints, and so on. These people were never seen with me. I didn't know them, had never heard of them. One after another, however, and on different days, they'd carefully hunt me up in Central Park, or some other place where I could see for two hundred feet in all directions. I'd be sitting, say, on a bench, and they'd come slouching by and slip me the money. Also, I'd get that money into a bank as fast as a six-cylinder touring-car could carry me to it.

I was fixed now, like the rest of them, with somebody always between me and trouble. Muggs had his wardman, and I had mine. That was the way — I could see — with all of them, from top to bottom. Everybody had a wardman.

The commissioner had his secretary, who was supposed to stop all squeals and kicks that came through the post-office. This was a cinch, seeing he opened all the commissioner's mail. It was the same way, exactly, in the Mayor's office; his honor's secretary was doing just the same. There may be nothing a Mayor does not want to get, but there's plenty he don't want to hear. And, trust me, neither of the secretaries — the commissioner's or the Mayor's were doing all this without a hunch from the Boss. If you don't believe it, all you've got to do is to look up that well known case where a kicking gambler sent a roar to the Mayor's house, in a registered letter, and got the Mayor's own signature to the receipt. It worked different than he figured. The first thing the Mayor did was to order that letter-writing card sharp pulled, and repulled, and pulled again, until he was pulled off the face of the earth; and don't forget that this was fully advertised where it would do the most good. There wasn't a gambler or a joint-keeper the whole length of the line but what got the full significance of that tip.

All of which shows you there's plenty of ways of organizing which ain't down in police regulations; and my organization wasn't the worst of them — if I do say so.

A third chapter from the career of a New York policeman—more absorbing than those already published—will be in the February McClure's*—out January 15*

PEGGY AND THE SWAMI

Another Peggy Story

BY

MARAVENE KENNEDY THOMPSON

AUTHOR OF "BLUE RIBBONS," "LIKE ONE OF THE FAMILY," ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY CLARENCE F. UNDERWOOD

"WELL?"

"Nothing, from a professional diagnosis," chuckled the doctor. "But from the man's, the bosom friend's of the family, I should say the witch is putting up a game on you, Ed."

Edwin Trowbridge shook his head.

"That's not her way of putting up a game, and you know it. What Peggy wants she goes after with might and main. Where another woman would cry and nag, she just smiles and everlastingly hustles. . . . No; it's not that. What did she say?"

"No more than she had already told you — that she isn't sick and is simply lying in bed because she wants to. Now, what is it she's been wanting lately that you've refused her? Come, it's the doctor that's asking. And I know there's something. The only question is — what?"

"Electricity," came the answer, slowly, after an evident struggle to avow it. "When she spoke about wanting electricity in the house, and having an electric range and iron and other electric frills, I decided she had gone clean mad over this modern convenience business ——"

"And sat down on it, of course," laughed the other. "Can't say's I blame you there. Endwater, seven miles, is the nearest electric station, isn't it? Take some money to pay for the wiring, and the meter cost 'way up. Whew!"

"No — it isn't — that. Uproar Falls'll furnish power not only for the house but the farm — and, as I look into it, I find there's no end of uses that electricity can be put to on the farm."

"By George! The Falls! That's right." He twinkled. "You go tell Peggy that and I guess she'll stop staring at the blank space on the wall ——"

"Staring at the blank space on the wall! You saw her, then! What — does it — mean? . . . No; it ain't a trick. I know Peggy too well to swallow that," he reiterated doggedly.

"Then I don't know what it is," said the physician frankly. He stood a moment in thought. "Let her alone till to-morrow; if she's not up then, lift her bodily, if necessary, and bring her down here. There have been cases of well people's taking to their beds and staying there the balance of their life. To tell the truth, Ed, I don't just like that stare of hers. If it isn't some new game to outwit you ——"

The husband gripped the back of the chair to steady his suddenly weakened knees.

"It's not a game, Art. Peggy wouldn't play me a trick like that."

"You may know, Ed; but Peggy couldn't do anything that would surprise me — simply because she's Peggy and I'm not Omniscience. Anyhow, she's well, so you needn't look as if the bottom of the world has dropped out."

"The bottom and top and everything else has dropped out for me if there's anything wrong with Peggy. And if you're deceiving me, Art Ford ——"

The physician's jocularity left him.

"Peggy is well physically," he reassured. "But if she isn't up in a few days I'll call a nerve specialist. Only, remember that it's no argument to say that Peggy hasn't done this kind of thing before. Peggy has a curious way of not repeating herself. There's just one sure thing you can always count on: that whenever Peggy wants a thing badly enough she's going to get it somehow. And you'll find this time that this way is the 'somehow.' "

Edwin Trowbridge went at once to his wife's room, and, strapping giant that he was, his knees trembled weakly under him. Peggy had never lain in bed in the day-time except with the baby. . . . And, though saucy and mischievous, she wouldn't play on his heart-strings in this needlessly cruel way. Doctor Ford knew Peggy, yes; but not all of Peggy, not the exquisitely loving and compassionate wife part that he knew.

He entered the room softly, and stopped half way between door and bed, suddenly all a-tremble with the sickening fear that had been his every time he entered the room since the day before yesterday—the initial day she refused to get up. Yet the room was most inviting: warm gray walls with a narrow border of pink roses outlining ceiling and doors and windows; furniture of rare old mahogany with quaint carving and violet-hued glass knobs; on the walls innumerable pictures of a baby — a baby laughing, a baby with fat dimpled body, a baby in long clothes and short clothes and no clothes at all, and each beautifully artistic in pose and workmanship and frame; but none more enchantingly lovely than the picture now framed by the big brass bed — Peggy herself, the dusky-eyed, dimpled mother of this baby, with skin like a creamy rose, and scarlet lips, and a tumbled mass of waving hair.

Peggy lay at full length on her back, very still, her arms lying limply outside the covers, following the lines of her body. From under the heavy lashes the limpid eyes looked forth on — not the representations of her pretty baby, nor the anxious face of her adoring husband, but — a blank space on the wall opposite! The husband followed her gaze fearfully. Then his eyes came back to hers. He had seen a myriad variety of expressions in those veiled eyes: roguish, beseeching, flaming with love, full of saucy devilment, black with tempestuous wrath, and in a trice angelically tender. But *this!* — this expression of aloofness — this look as though she did not see him — this strange, paralyzing stare into blankness! What did it mean? What could it mean?

"Guess you've looked at that piece of blank wall long enough, haven't you, Peggy?" he asked playfully. "Turn around here and look at your old Ed for a change. Please, honey girl. You say you're not sick, and—I want you up. It's lonesome as a graveyard downstairs without my pretty Peggy love. I can't read or fix my accounts or do anything without you there, and it's too sleety to do anything outdoors." He bent over her. "You just put those pretty arms around my neck and let me carry you downstairs. Come!"

"Ed dear, please — go — away," she singsonged, as between baby lullabies. "I — mustn't — be disturbed. I'll — get — up — when — I'm — ready."

"But when'll you be ready? You've been here two days now. That's long enough — and a heap too long if there's nothing the matter with you."

"Annie — is — taking — good — care — of — Eddie — and — the — house," she intoned. "There's — no — need — for — me — to — get — up — till — I'm — ready. Please — darling — stay — away — from — me — please — please — please — please ——"

"I just won't. If there's anything the matter with you I'll get doctors here pretty quick to treat you; and if there isn't you sha'n't lie here like this any longer. Last night you locked your door, and you didn't even let Ed in for his good-night romp. And the Lord knows what you'll do next if this keeps up. Come, I'm going to take you downstairs. Do you hear me, Peggy?"

She did not answer; only gazed, as one unseeing, at the blank space on the wall. With a quick move, he thrust an arm under her and started to raise her — and stopped, releasing her in frightened suddenness. Her back was as lifeless as a frost-bitten alder, and the arms were inanimate things!

Was this limp creature Peggy? Peggy, always so vivacious, so splendidly active, so sprightly and agile, with the vigor and spirit of a colt? Peggy, one bounding vitality, like this?

Shivering unaccountably, he cast a scared glance over his shoulder at the blank grayness.

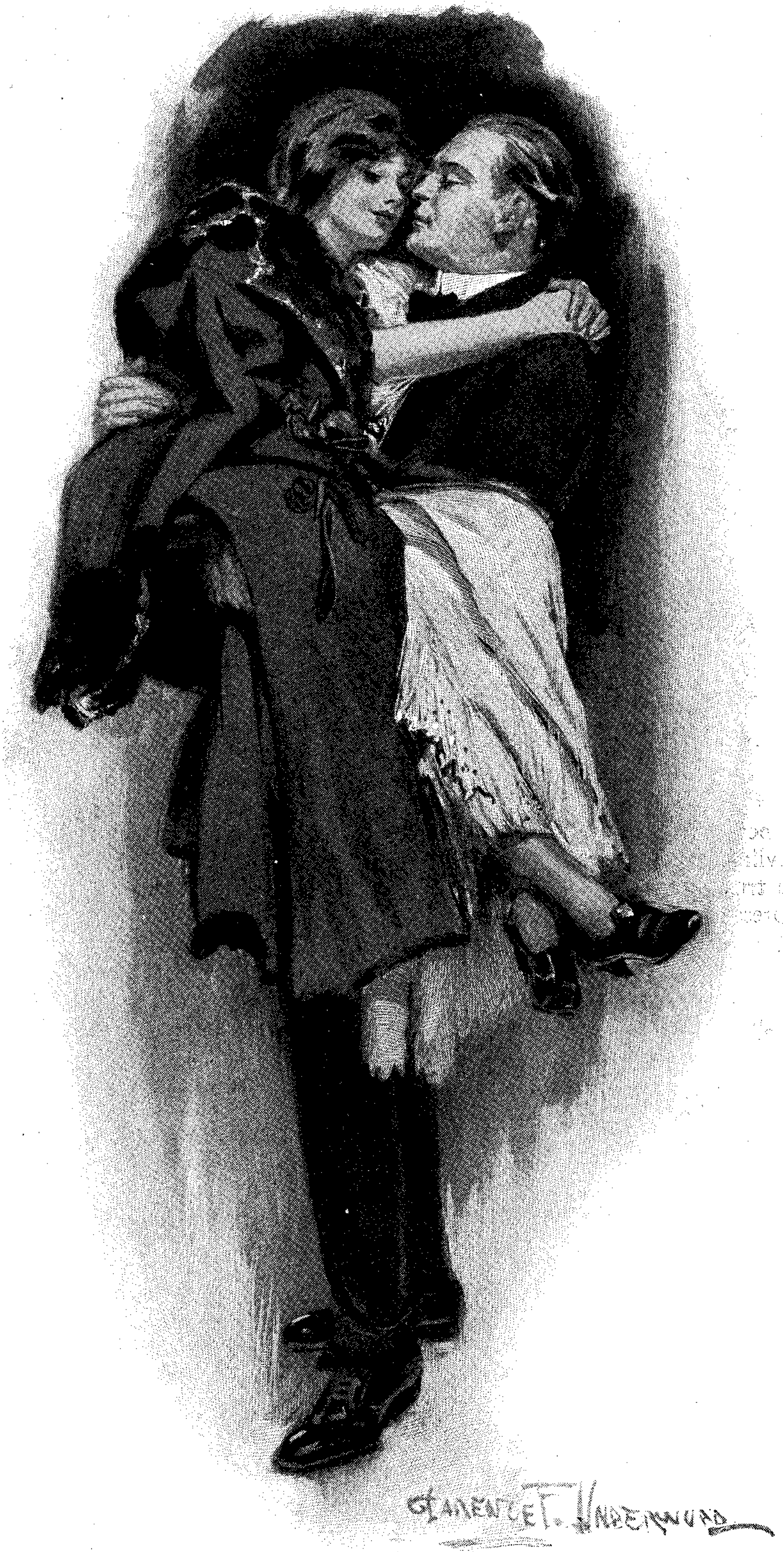
"Did — did Doc feel your — back, Peggy?" he asked huskily.

"Go away — go away — go away," she reiterated monotonously. "Please — please — please! Ed darling, I don't want you — here — now. I don't — I don't ——".

He backed toward the door, bewildered, uncertain, half angry, wholly afraid. Downstairs again, he walked and rewalked the length of the big living-room. It clung to his hands — the dread feel of that spineless back. He went to the telephone.

"No, you idiot, I won't," came Doctor Ford's reply. "When I take myself and horse out in this sleet and ice, it'll be for a sick person. Limp? Well, it's because she wants it limp, then. If she's got you so locoed you can't see through her little game, then, by golly, take your medicine and stay frightened. Shut up! I know that witch. She wouldn't treat you that way? You make me tired! All right, believe it; but that's my only prescription — electrical treatment — ha, ha!"

The door opened. He turned expectantly. But it was not his wife's graceful figure and bewitching face. It was "Ichy Sam"— Richard Samuel Loomis on church register and deeds and tax receipts, but to Redville, from tiny toddlers to octogenarians, simply "Ichy Sam" — as his twin brother, christened "Samuel Richard Loomis," was "Sam Ichy." It was thus they themselves had first pronounced their cognomens, innocent of the mirthful significance. And thus they still called themselves and each other, though not innocently now. For fun


CLARENCE F. UNDERWOOD

"'IT WASN'T BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO KISS YOU YESTERDAY,' SHE WHISPERED. 'ONLY ——'"

was to them as the marrow of their bones, and a joke no less a joke because it was on themselves. Next to his wife, there was no one Trowbridge would rather have seen just then than the little roly-poly, red-headed man entering. Everybody told his affairs to Ichy Sam. Perhaps because Ichy Sam never repeated even the "yes" or "no" of a confidence; perhaps because his mind, like a plummet, always went directly to the bottom of a difficulty. And Peggy was the apple of Ichy Sam's eye as well as of Edwin Trowbridge's. He gave a keen look at Trowbridge's perturbed face.

"Guess y' ain't told Peggy she's t' have th' electricity. Kinder hard t' give in — eh? Wall, it might be," he chortled, "considerin' you've been wastin' good water power all this while. Nothin' that she kin use misses her long, by cracky! An' she allus finds a way t' git it, too. Begun when she was seven month old. I kin see her plain as though 'twas yis'day. Thar the little tike stood 'side o' cheer, screechin' an' holdin' out her hands fer a big red apple on the windersill. When she saw Ann wa'**n't** goin' t' give it t' her,— Ole John wa'n't thar, er course she'd had it,— she jest up an' *walked* across an' grabbed it. Hadn't ever took a step afore, by hookey! I ain't ever seed a kid yit quite as cunnin' as she was, Ed. An' pretty! Git her up, Ed. The place ain't nohow as stimulatin' without the sass-box round. I got t' have some kind o' antidote fer this dad-burned weather."

"Do — do you think Peggy's doing this — to get the electricity?"

"Well, drat it! What else'd she be doin' it fer? She ain't sick."

"No, she isn't sick. Only ——"

Ichy Sam laughed silently, his rotund figure drawing in and out like a big rubber ball.

"It sure is to laugh, Ed. You drive her into these antics, and then air as hurt by 'em as an innercent lamb. By golly! don't you know she's *got* t' be a cuss t' sarcumvent that consarvative spirit o' yourn? You're 's proud 's a hen with her first hatchin' over the style an' modern fixin's y've got here, an', by cracky! you'd not had one if Peggy wa'n't the clever little rascal she is."

The younger man eyed him narrowly for a moment.

"Look here, Ichy Sam, you haven't ever jumped on me before about Peggy. Why are you doing it now?"

The little man fidgeted.

"I don't know egzac'ly, Ed. Married folks's business is thar own. But this playin' sick t' win you over ain't nohow like Peggy. I'd plumb hate t' see the little cuss lose her spunky ways. An' seems 's though she must be doin' it to take sich a lazy, triflin' way 's this. Thar was some class t' the way she got the bath-room — plumbers here every night fer a week while you was asleep, an' bath-room all done, white an' shiny as Cass Ray's false teeth, afore you knew it. An' the steam heat an' hard-wood floors!" He chuckled. "I'd laugh in my grave over the foxy way she got them, Ed."

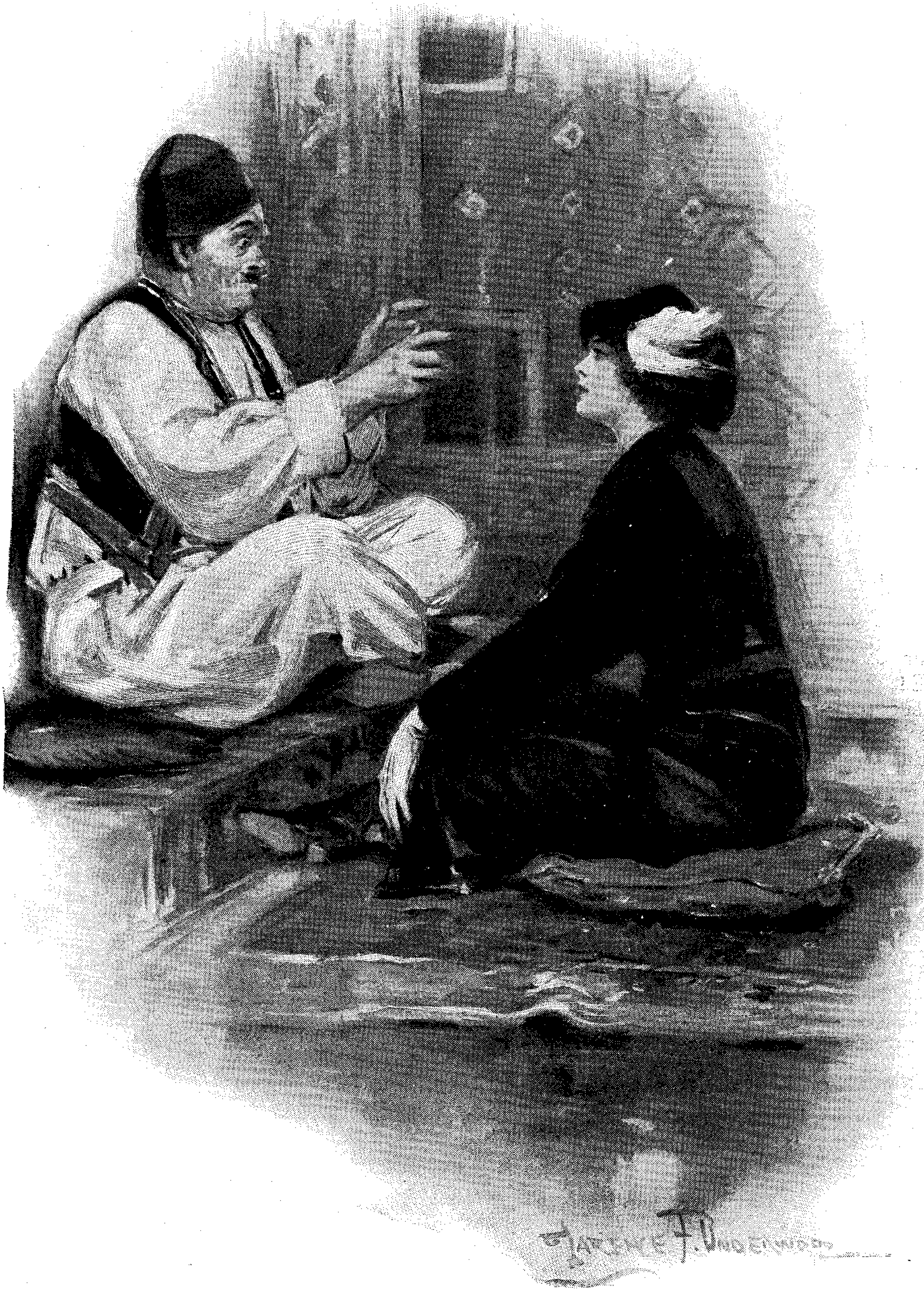
After Ichy Sam's departure Trowbridge sat silent, his long legs stretched out laxly, a curious expression in his eyes. A sleety rain beat persistently against the windows, and the wind whistled and moaned. Though only four o'clock in the afternoon and late in March, the room would have been in darkness but for the glow of the logs in the big fireplace. By this glow he viewed the room, a large room furnished in priceless old mahogany — furniture that had been in the Trowbridge family for generations. With soft shrieks of joy, Peggy had pounced upon the precious pieces scattered aimlessly over the house and stored in the attic. Restoration to their original beauty had followed; and these upon which Trowbridge now gazed stood in mellow splendor against a background of softly tinted walls and polished oak floor and Persian rugs — an unusual living-room for a farm-house! It had originally been two rooms; and it was against his wishes that Peggy had achieved the transformation, and the hard-wood floor, and the big veranda beyond, and — all the rest. She had wanted them, and had got them — somehow. Now she wanted electricity.

He rose and went to the radiator, felt of it, adjusted the regulator to turn on more steam, came back to the fireplace and laid on another log, waited till it blazed up; then — he went upstairs again. From his own closet he took his big fur-lined coat and from Peggy's her bedroom slippers.

"The jig's up, Peggy," said he quietly. "I'm going to get you into these things and carry you downstairs. Come, sit up!"

Peggy sighed — a long, lingering sigh — and turned her eyes reluctantly from the blank wall to her husband's face. The man's eyes, deeply gray and clear, met hers steadily. But it was not their steadiness that caused Peggy's blank stare to leap to sudden caressing tenderness. It was the hurt she saw there — the boyishly wounded spirit that shone through them. Hurriedly she fumbled for a printed card under her pillow; then, clutching it tightly, reached her hands toward him with a pretty motion.

He laughed joyously, and enveloped her in the great-coat and lifted her to his arms. For a moment he stood still, his mouth on a level with hers — waiting. A shamed little smile, and Peggy's lips went to his.



“‘I TRIED TO LOOK AT HIM STEADY, BUT I GOT—TIRED, I THINK. I WAS ALL SHAKY AND—AND FRIGHTENED’.”

"It wasn't because I didn't want to kiss you yesterday, darling," she whispered. Only ——"

He laughed again. Peggy was her own shining self, and for the moment nothing else mattered. He tossed her to his shoulder, ran down the steps, and dropped her into a deep-seated rocker before the fire. Then he seated himself and looked at her squarely, a smile in his eyes.

"Now tell me all about it," said he, "and let's get this matter out of our systems as we have s'teen others. Start 'er up, Pegsy."

But the clock ticked off five minutes before Peggy spoke, her eyes all the while on the blazing logs, the cardboard resting between her hands. Half shyly she turned to her husband.

"You know, I — wanted — electricity ——"

"Um-m! So that *was* it."

"No — no!" She shook her head violently. "It wasn't to get it that I did this, but to *not want to get it.*"

He looked at her stupidly. "What?"

"I wanted the electricity put in so bad, I knew I'd just keep on till I up and got it — somehow. And oh, Ed darling, I didn't want to act mean again! I've been awfully ashamed over getting the other things the ways I have. You're so good about forgiving me, and are always so sure I'm going to be good next time. And — and I love you so." She shook back the mass of hair and the enveloping coat from her shoulders. "I tried — oh, I tried so hard to forget about the electricity! But — I only thought about it all the more. Then — I saw a notice in the paper about — non-resistance; how it was something we could learn, and never want anything again, ever. So — so I went to see — him, the — Swami ——"

"Him? Swami? . . . I don't understand. You say you went to see some one? Where?"

Peggy did not see the strange look in his eyes, the look of one who comes suddenly upon the unexpected, suddenly and — fearfully. She held out the printed card. By the red glow of the fire he read:

Strike off thy fetters! Bonds that bind thee down,
Of shining gold, or darker, baser ore;
For fetters, tho' of gold, are not less strong to bind.
Then off with them, Sannyâsin bold. Say
"Om tat sat, Om!"

This thirst for goods forever quench; it drags
From birth to death, and death to birth, the soul.
He conquers all who conquers self. Know this
And never yield, Sannyâsin bold! Say
"Om tat sat, Om!"

Thus, day to day, till Karma's powers spent
Release the soul for ever. No more is birth
Nor I, nor thou, nor god, nor man. The "I"
Has All become, the All is "I," and bliss.
Know thou art That, Sannyâsin bold! Say
"Om tat sat, Om!"

He held it a moment after reading, turned the unprinted side uppermost and looked at it, then back again, vainly seeking illumination.

"I can't make anything out of this. What does it mean?"

Peggy puckered her brows.

"I — I don't know. He said his — his Guru gave it to him, and that I was to read it once an hour, and — and it's part of the lesson, you see. That's what I'm trying to — tell you ——"

He rose and gave a quick turn across the room, stopping beside her.

"Tell me first, *where did you go?* Just that, little wife."

"To the Swami's place in Buffalo," returned Peggy simply. "A beautiful, queer, dim, magiciany sort of place with Oriental rugs and draperies and cushions, and perfume in the air — incense, I think. I was afraid at first, a little. It was all so different. And he was so strange and brown, and dressed in such funny clothes — a white robe, and big twisted turban of cloth on his head, and a gold embroidery scarf tied about his waist. He sat on a cushion with his legs crossed under him, and — and so did I. But he was on a platform about six inches high, covered with a beautiful rug, and I was on a cushion at his feet. And I breathed through one nostril — deep — 'way down — like *this* — then through the other. . . . Then he chanted a song, a sort of song, and swayed his body back and forth — and I did, too, after a little — but not easy like him. And ——"

"Yes?"

She looked up quickly.

"Why, Ed, are you sick? You look so — queer! Why, what is the matter?"

"Go on," he commanded gently. "What happened next, pet?"

"You're hoarse!" cried she, all anxiety. "You've gone out in the sleet bareheaded! Oh, Ed! — and you said you wouldn't!"

"The — Swami? Go on, Peggy. What else?"

"Oh-h!" Peggy thought a moment to get her bearings. "Why, nothing — much. He laid his fingers on my forehead — in long, soft strokes, and muttered strange words; and then he told me how to relax and get myself in a receptive state for non-resistance — and that's what I've been doing. Only you wouldn't let me be long enough to really try it right."

"At the Swami's, Peggy. What else? Tell me!"

"I took hold of his hands, and he moved my arms up over my head, and then down — up and down — up and down — up and down — like *this*. And — and he looked in my eyes close, and told me to keep my eyes right on his. Oh, Ed! he had blue eyes. I thought they always had black eyes, but he says they don't. I tried to look at him steady, but I got — tired, I think. Or — or — else he was tired and *thought* me away. He can *think* people into doing things — wonderful things!"

"Then?"

She dropped her eyes. "I — I — don't like — to tell you. But — I — I got up and — *ran* out! I had paid when I went in, and I was so glad! For I was all — shaky and — and frightened — and I wouldn't have gone back for — anything! I wish I hadn't been so silly! There was lots more to the lesson. But I did all he told me. That is,"— she looked up, laughing drolly, — "all I could do with you, great silly boy, bumping in and out every other minute!"

With her face peering from out the loosened hair, her slender body lost in the great-coat, arms and neck gleaming baby-white against the dark fur, she looked like a very little girl. And it swept through the man staring down at her that in evil and the knowledge of evil she was, in truth, only a very little girl. He walked away from her, so that she could not see the horror in his eyes, a horror that he would never quite lose, by reason of this that she had escaped — had *run* away from, not knowing why she ran. His hands clenched, and a wave of murderous passion surged from head to foot. She had sat at this vampire's feet — trustfully, trying to learn how to be good! — this "Swami" with *blue* eyes! probably born in Iowa.

He had not known where she was — perhaps no one knew of her intention to visit this place; and *if* she hadn't run out ——

"Ed!"

"Just a minute."

He stood looking out of the window. But of the stretches of snow and the beating sleet he saw nothing. His eyes were turned inward; and amid all the chaos and confusion there they leaped to one point and fastened upon it. Why did he so persistently refuse his wife's requests to improve the house and add the simple conveniences she wanted? He was amply able to give her what she asked — doubly, trebly. Even had it been necessary to bring the electricity from Endwater, it would not have mattered. He indulged her lavishly in other ways. And he had always been as pleased as Punch over the conveniences and improvements that Peggy had got despite him. Even if he hadn't been, why shouldn't his wife have the comforts that meant so much to her? Yes — why not? why not?— *why not?* he asked himself savagely.

And out of the clutter of his mind, things half forgotten and things there without his knowing why or whence they came, there arose the answer, and clearly, as it does sometimes when the soul has been roughly shaken. He worshiped the "gods of things that are," and Peggy the "gods of things to be." It was the fundamental struggle between two conflicting forces as old as the world. Change, upheaval, the usurping of an old way by a new — it was physical and mental and spiritual agony for him to contemplate, and he revolted involuntarily from the very suggestion, as from some dread disaster. And to Peggy it was bliss.

And Peggy was right — in principle, if not always in practice. Growth was health, and only death lay in stagnation. And not to want things — Peggy's pathetic solution of their difficulties — was not a state to be desired, but one to be shunned as a plague. Peggy must save him from himself.

He went to her, and lifted her up, and seated himself in her chair, with her closely in his arms.

"Listen, Peggy. I don't want you to stop wanting improvements and new things. I have an idea I won't be quite such an old mossback after this. But if I am — why, you go ahead and get things — 'somehow,' just as you have before." He smiled. "Yes; I mean it. You're to have what you want — with my consent if you can get it, or without it. Do you see?"

Peggy bolted upright and stared at him in sheer bewilderment. She had never seen him like this. And she was vaguely disturbed by his earnestness and the tense lines about his lips and the seriousness of his eyes. And this astounding thing he was telling her!

"Ed dear, I'm afraid I don't understand. Are you telling me this in earnest? And, if you are, what if — I take you up?" She dimpled mischievously. "I can want an awful lot of things, Ed. You aren't forgetting that, are you?"

"No," he answered, still serious. "We've been married three years, and I guess I know my pretty Peggy love all right. There's been just twice when you wanted things you shouldn't have had — and you didn't try those times to get 'em." He drew her closer. "There isn't a better little wife in ten States."

For a brief moment Peggy basked sunnily in this tribute. Then her face buried itself against his breast and a sob came up.

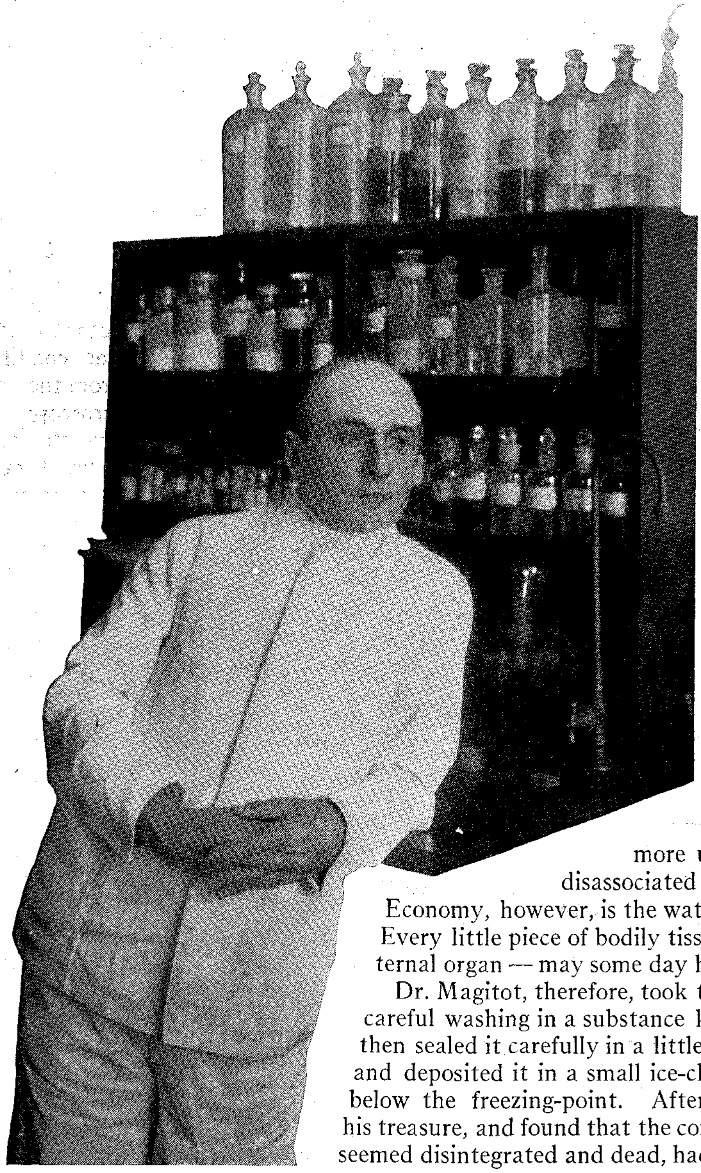
"You think I was — non-resisting. But — oh, Ed dear, I — wasn't. I tried and tried — but all the time, underneath, I was planning a way to — get — the — electricity!"

"Peggy Goes Hunting," a new Peggy adventure, will appear in the February McClure's *— out January 15*

ON THE TRAIL OF IMMORTALITY

AN EXCLUSIVE AND AUTHORIZED ARTICLE DESCRIBING IN FULL THE REVOLUTIONARY DISCOVERIES OF DR. ALEXIS CARREL — THE FIRST AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT OF THE MARVELOUS EXPERIMENTS FOR WHICH THE YOUNG AMERICAN SCIENTIST WAS AWARDED THE WORLD-FAMOUS NOBEL PRIZE

BY BURTON J. HENDRICK



A FEW months ago Dr. M. P. Magitot, one of the most distinguished surgeons of Paris, was called upon to perform an operation of peculiar difficulty. A patient came into his office whose eye had been badly burned with quicklime. A large scar had formed upon the cornea, the horny outside coating of the eyeball, and the man was blind. Under ordinary circumstances, an injury of this kind would have been practically irreparable.

A few weeks before, however, Dr. Magitot had performed an operation upon another patient — this one suffering from glaucoma. In this case the surgeon had to extirpate the eye. In the old days Dr. Magitot would have thrown the diseased member away — what could be imagined more useless than a human eyeball disassociated from its natural environment? Economy, however, is the watchword of the modern surgery. Every little piece of bodily tissue — skin, bone, muscle, or internal organ — may some day have an almost priceless value. Dr. Magitot, therefore, took this homeless eye, and gave it a careful washing in a substance known as Lock's solution. He then sealed it carefully in a little tube containing blood serum, and deposited it in a small ice-chest which had a temperature below the freezing-point. After several hours he examined his treasure, and found that the cornea, which, after removal, had seemed disintegrated and dead, had resumed its old transparence.

Satisfied with this result, the surgeon placed it back in its frigid environment and awaited developments. At the end of eight days the second patient, referred to at the beginning of this article, came in for treatment. Dr. Magitot, in a few moments, had removed the scar from his injured cornea. In doing this, of course, he removed a piece of the cornea itself. How was this serious lesion to be repaired? The surgeon reached down into his ice-chest and skimmed off a piece, or "flap," from the cornea of the frozen eye. He then deftly attached this to the wound on his second patient's eye. As he himself described the operation to the Academy of Sciences in Paris, he formed "a little window, just like a transparent opening in a thick wall." In a few hours the adhesion was complete; in a few days the wound had healed, and the blind man was able to see through the aperture.

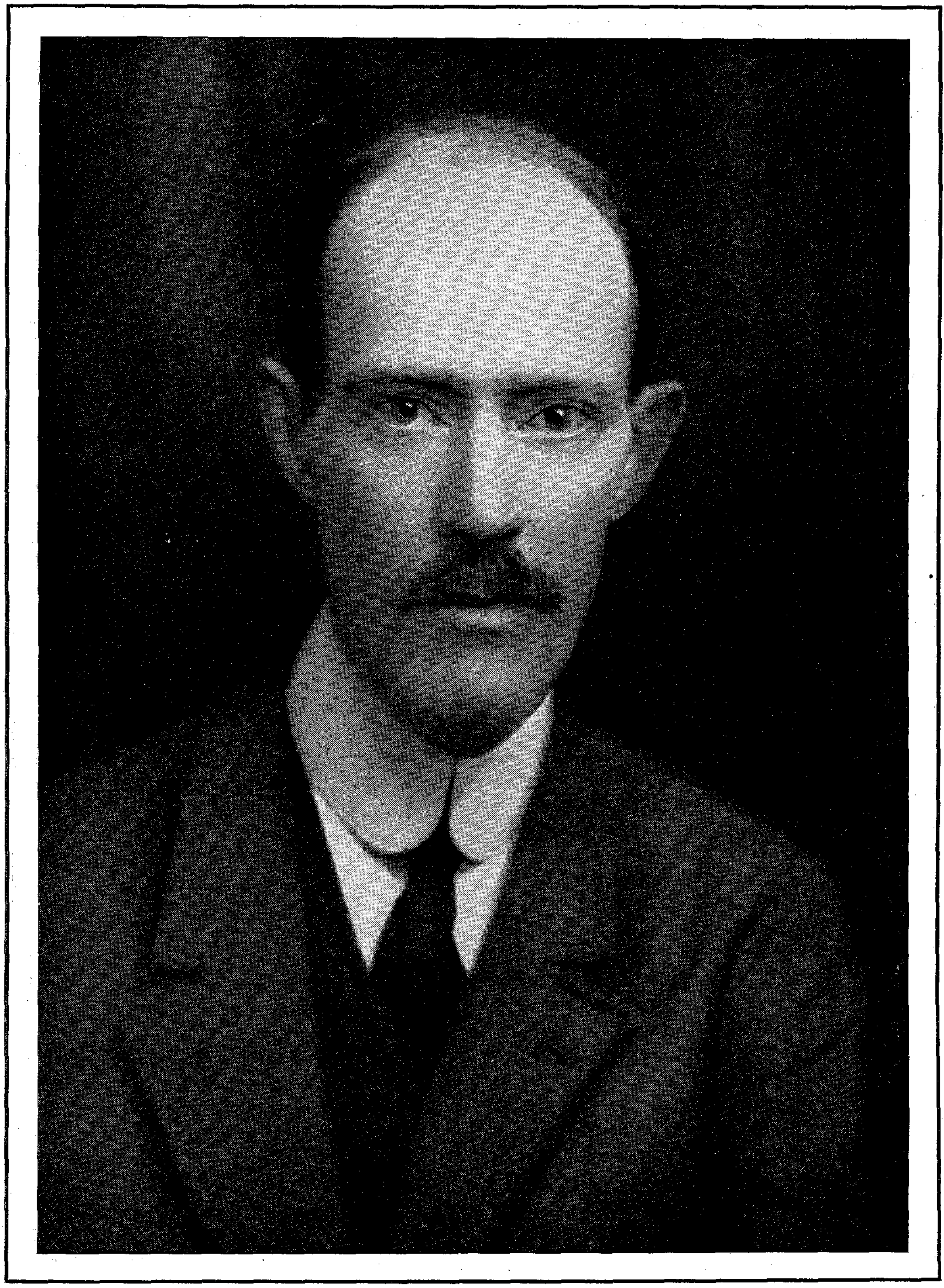
Dr. Alexis Carrel, of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research in New York, is the man whose laboratory researches have made possible operations of this kind. An article published in McCLURE'S MAGAZINE for February, 1909, described the preliminary experiments that led up to these practical results. It was then made clear that Dr. Carrel, in developing a new technique for uniting severed arteries and veins, had opened up a new field in modern surgery. At that time he had performed many startling experiments on animals that indicated the usefulness of his method as applied to human beings. He had transplanted arteries and veins from one animal to another almost at will. He had kept these extirpated organs for weeks and months in cold storage, and found, when they were transplanted to another animal, that they worked practically as well as new. He had taken the kidney of one cat and transplanted it into another cat, and discovered that it functioned perfectly in its new environment for several weeks.

In recognition of these and other experiments, Dr. Carrel has just been awarded the Nobel prize. His experiments, however, have an even deeper interest than their practical applications. A few months ago Professor Edward A. Schaefer, in his inaugural address as president of the British Association, created a world-wide sensation by declaring his belief that life and death were purely chemical reactions. The time would certainly come, he said, when the experimenter in the laboratory would manufacture life, precisely as he now puts together chemical substances. In part substantiation of his belief, Professor Schaefer referred to the work of Dr. Carrel and his associate at the Rockefeller Institute, Dr. Montrose T. Burrows. It is because Dr. Carrel's work sheds new light upon this, the everlasting problem of the ages — the origin of life, and the particular forces that influence its development — that his experiments, technical as they may at first seem, have the utmost significance. Does life originate spontaneously? Is death its natural and inevitable consequence? Is old age really a disease, or a fundamental fact of nature itself? Is there such a thing as perennial youth? Can our bodily organism, worn out with hardship and decay, be revitalized and made active again? Certainly there are no more important and fascinating subjects of scientific investigation than these; and Dr. Carrel's work, as well as that of several other investigators, has a certain bearing upon all these questions.

Active Life Outside the Body

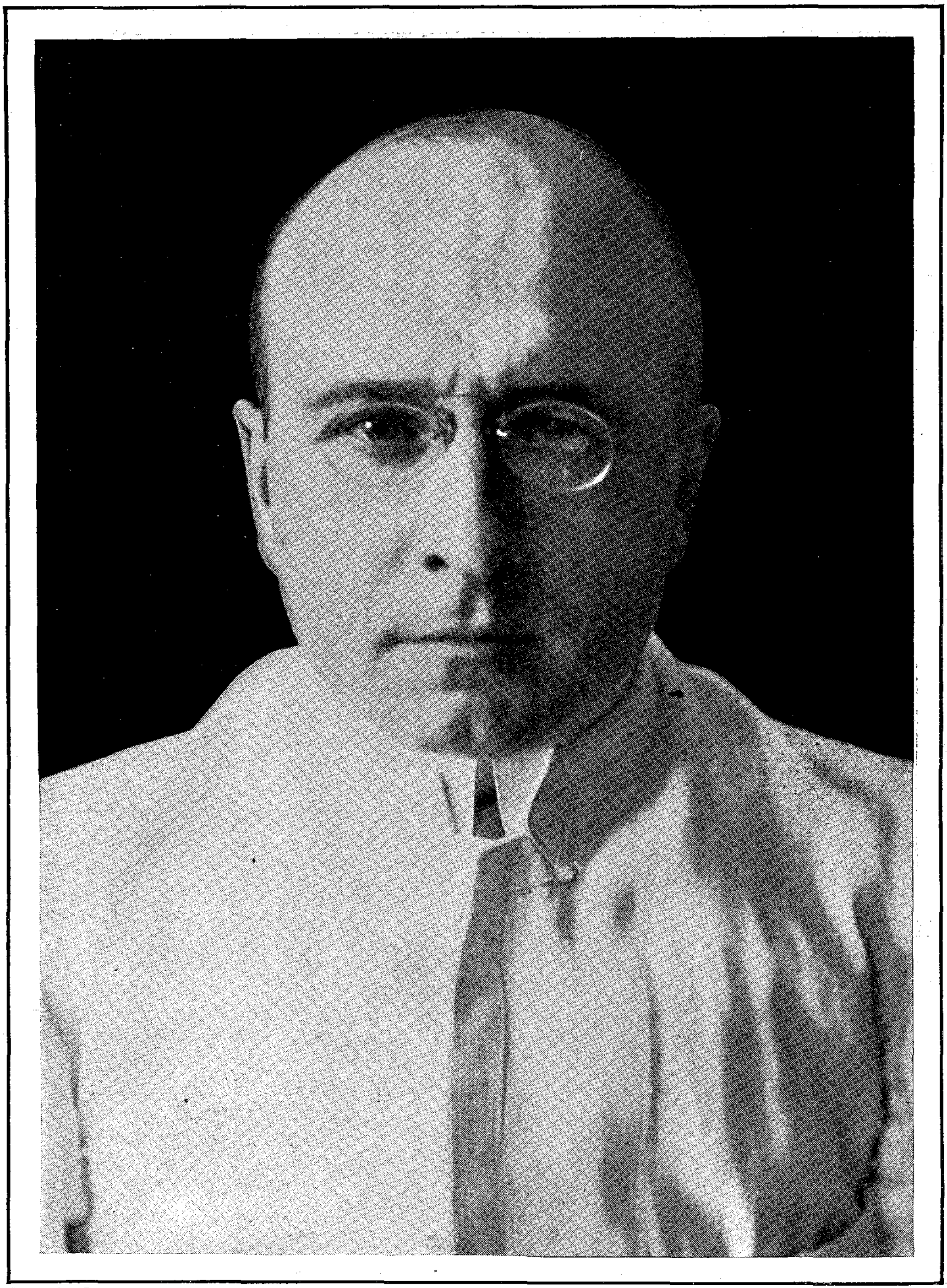
The early experiments, already described in McCLURE'S, demonstrated that animal tissue, taken from its parent organism, can be kept in a condition of latent life for a considerable period. Under these conditions it lives in a state of suspended animation; like certain well known animals, it apparently possesses the quality of hibernation. These discoveries led to others of even greater significance. Evidently cellular vitality could be maintained in a quiescent state outside of the body; was active, functioning life possible under the same conditions? Would a piece of skin, removed from the human organism and placed on a microscopic slide, continue to grow and perform its normal functions? Would the human heart pulsate indefinitely with its accustomed rhythm anywhere except in the body itself? Would a pair of lungs, taken from the thoracic cavity and isolated in the laboratory, still gently rise and fall with all the reality of respiration? Any one who had asked these questions a year ago would simply have received a contemptuous negative. "The function of an organ," says Dr. Stephen Leduc in his recently published "Mechanism of Life," "ceases when it is isolated from the organism of which it forms a part. This is the chief cause of our lack of progress in the analysis of life."

Several years ago Dr. Ross G. Harrison, now Professor of Anatomy at Yale University, demonstrated that sections of animal tissue could be grown outside the body. Dr. Harrison experimented along these lines with nerve tissue. In his scientific writings Dr. Carrel completely acknowledges his indebtedness to these "splendid experiments" of Dr. Harrison. The work accomplished by "this great biologist," as Dr. Carrel calls his American predecessor, he has developed to an extent probably not anticipated by Harrison himself.



DR. ROSS GRANVILLE HARRISON

PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY AT YALE UNIVERSITY, WHO WAS THE FIRST TO GROW ANIMAL TISSUE OUTSIDE THE BODY. THIS WAS THE DISCOVERY THAT FORMED THE STARTING-POINT OF DR. CARREL'S RECENT WORK. WHATEVER MAY BE THE FATE OF THE BODY, DR. CARREL'S EXPERIMENTS SHOW THAT THE CELLS THEMSELVES NEED NOT NECESSARILY DIE. UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS THEY ARE IMMORTAL



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DR. ALEXIS CARREL

THE FIRST MEDICAL SCIENTIST IN THE UNITED STATES TO RECEIVE THE NOBEL PRIZE. ABOUT FOUR YEARS AGO DR. CARREL DEMONSTRATED THE FACT THAT ANIMAL ORGANS, SUCH AS THE ARTERIES, VEINS, KIDNEYS, AND SPLEEN, COULD BE TAKEN FROM THE BODY, PRESERVED FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD IN COLD STORAGE, AND THEN TRANSPLANTED INTO OTHER BODIES. HE HAS SINCE SHOWN THAT ANIMAL TISSUES CAN BE MADE TO GROW AND FUNCTION OUTSIDE THE BODY. DR. CARREL IS THIRTY-NINE YEARS OLD

Naturally, Dr. Carrel did not begin his experiments with full-grown animal organs. A collection of cells, no larger than a millet seed, sufficed to prove, or disprove, his fundamental idea. The basis of all physical activity, of course, is this same individual cell. It is the seat of life and of death — the fountain of health and the corroding center of disease. When medical science has penetrated all the secrets of its microscopic operations, it will have solved the riddle of life itself. In studying the workings of the cell outside the body, the investigator had to reproduce, as far as possible, all the conditions of cellular development that exist within. The cells live, of course, by taking in nutrition. Their vitality and growth depend, likewise, upon a certain body warmth — which, in human beings, ranges in the neighborhood of 38° Centigrade. In the laboratory neither of these two fundamental conditions of growth offers any particular difficulty. Ordinary blood plasma is rich in nourishment, and an incubator readily supplies the necessary body heat.

Dr. Carrel extirpated from his experimental animals — a chick, a dog, a cat, or a frog — pieces of tissue. He selected small samples of the most important bodily organs — pieces of skin, of liver, of heart, of kidney, of spleen, of thyroid gland, of bone and cartilage. Placing these specimens upon a microscopic slide, he poured upon each a drop or two of blood plasma. He was thus supplying each tissue with what is technically known as its medium — in other words, with its food.

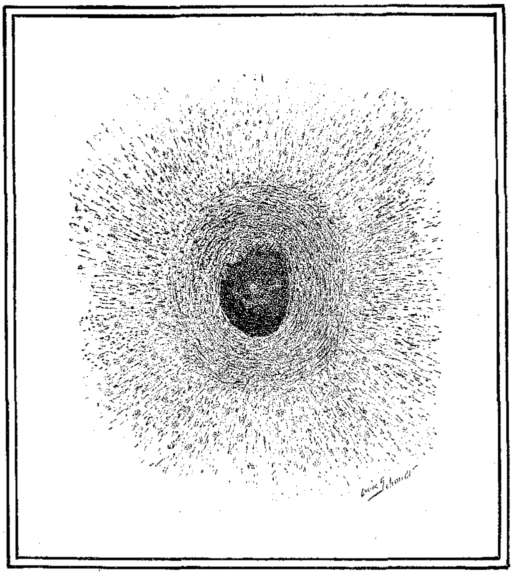
The glass slides containing the specimens were then carefully placed in an incubator which had been previously heated up to body temperature. With this the limit of human ingenuity had been reached. According to prevailing popular conceptions, there could be little question as to what would happen. The tissues, having been separated from their parent organism, would wither and atrophy. As they were simply dead animal flesh, they must go the way of all mortality. However, these particular tissues showed no indications of following the accepted rule. There were not the slightest signs of degeneration. Several of the specimens remained quiescent for several days; others showed marked changes in a few hours. The first sign of revitalization was a thin bluish or opalescent area which began slowly to surround the fragment. Then a granulation appeared at the edges and surfaces. That is to say, the tissue was reaching out into its medium, taking in food, and beginning to proliferate. The granulation, in other words, was composed of new and fresh cells. In a few hours the tissue began to shoot cells into the medium in all directions. The first to appear were elongated or spindle-shaped; then came cells of all possible dimensions. In a few days the tiny mass on the microscopic slide became the scene of the wildest vegetation. There was a regular jungle of life, and the investigator, looking into the microscope, could see the vital process of cell formation taking place under his eye. In some cases the growth was so rapid and on so large a scale that it was visible without a microscope. In a short time the new growth was ten, twenty, or fifty times as large as the original fragment. In others the fragment disappeared entirely; cell started from cell — a second generation, that is, was produced. A piece of kidney, taken from a young cat, was especially riotous in the vigor and rapidity of its proliferation.

All Parts of the Body Growing on Microscopic Slide

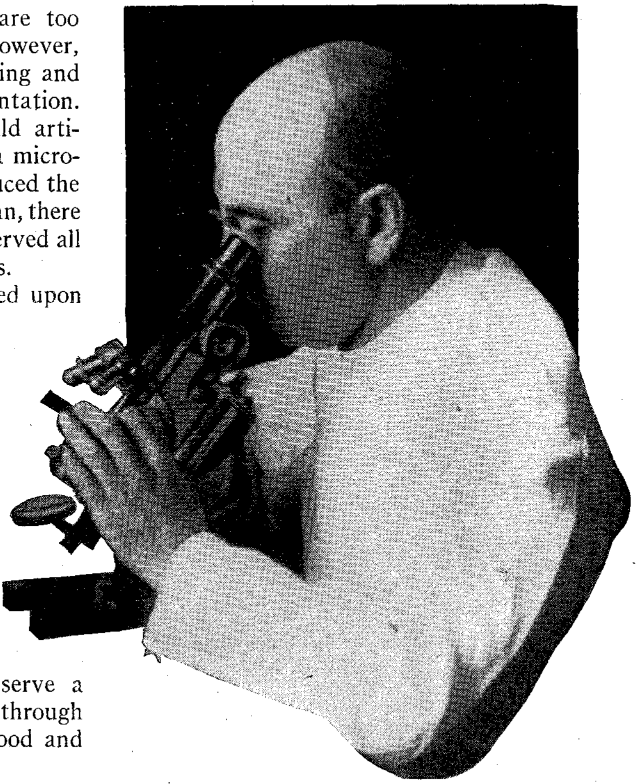
In a short time, therefore, Dr. Carrel had practically all parts of the body growing independently on microscopic slides. He was able to observe that marvelous phenomenon which is constantly taking place in the human body and without which life itself would be impossible — the birth and growth of body cells. Protoplasm, so to speak, was here caught upon the fly. On one slide a piece of bone was manufacturing new bone; on another, cartilage was rapidly producing new cartilage; a section of the liver was giving birth to new liver tissue; kidney was growing kidney; and a small piece of heart was manufacturing new heart. From a theoretical standpoint, at least, it might almost be said that the experimenter was constructing an artificial body in minute sections; at least, he was growing in the laboratory all the tissues which are essential to the animal organism. And these tissues were behaving, in this isolated growth, just about the same as they do in the normal human body. Especially noteworthy, for example, was the fact that the rapidity with which the tissue grew depended upon the age of the animal from which it had been taken. A piece of liver from a foetal chicken almost immediately flowered into growth; a piece of bone from an adult dog started only after several days, and then developed just as sluggishly as it does upon the adult animal itself.

Was this, however, real growth, and did the new cells have all the vitality and functioning power of the native organism? Each body cell, as already said, has its particular part to play; were those produced in this artificial manner obeying the natural impulse? In the main, these cellular mechanisms, especially in a piece of tissue no larger than a pinhead, are too minute to follow; there is one organ, however, whose movements are sufficiently striking and obvious to furnish grounds for experimentation. That is the heart. If Dr. Carrel could artificially grow a segment of heart upon a microscopic slide, and if this segment reproduced the rhythmical pulsations of the natural organ, there could be no doubt that his growths preserved all the functions of regularly nourished cells.

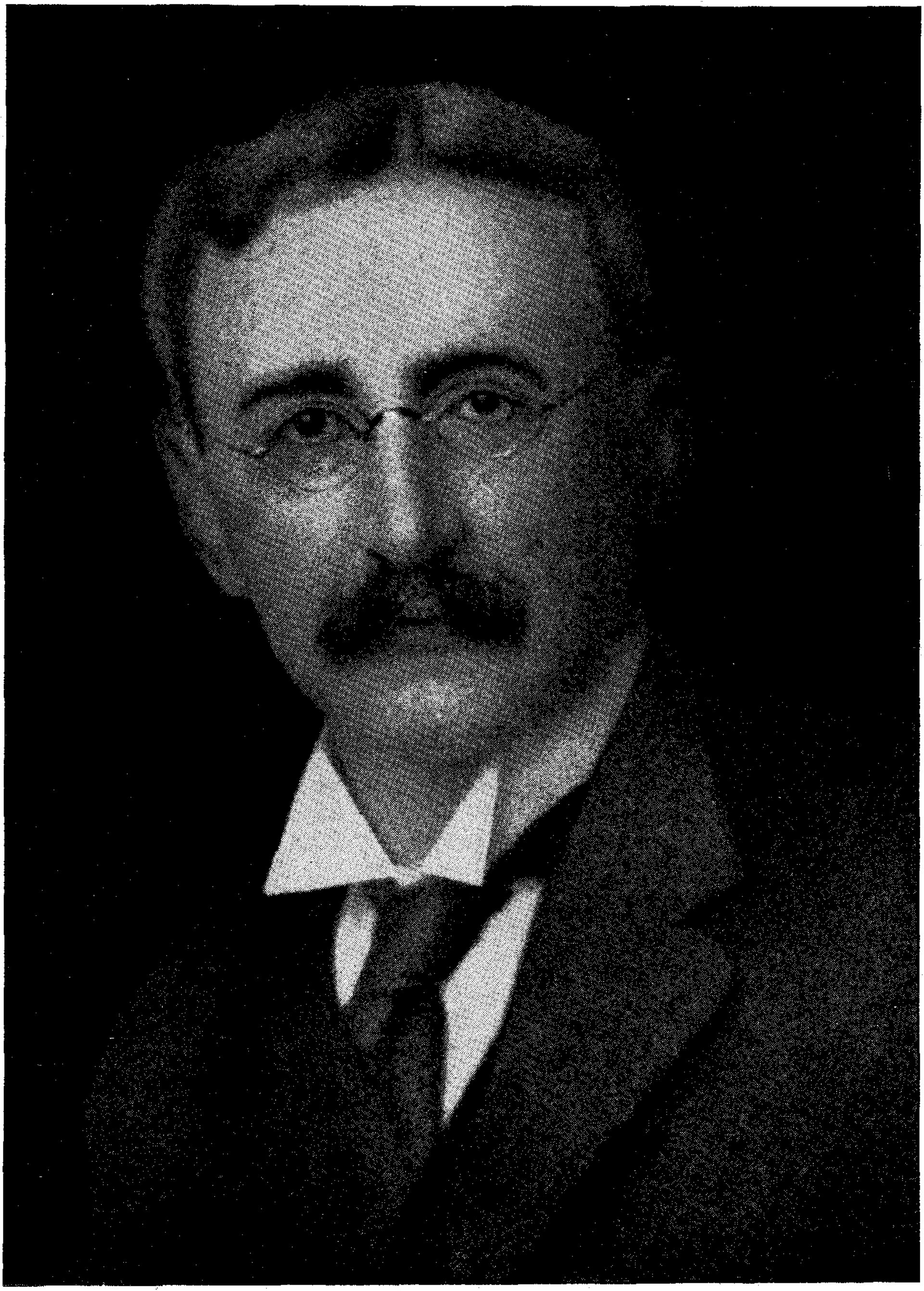
Two fragments of chicken heart, placed upon the slide and fed with plasma, immediately showed signs of activity. Their growth was exceedingly active; and, in a few hours, both fragments were regularly pulsating. These heart-beats, however, were more rapid than those that take place in the human body. The little fragment was industriously contracting and expanding at the rate of 120 pulsations a minute, and the larger at the rate of 92. The sight was certainly a strange one. In the chicken body these rhythmical movements serve a definite purpose: they force the blood through the veins and arteries, and so bring food and oxygen to the system and carry away large quantities of débris. Upon this laboratory cover-glass, however, the pulsations seemed entirely aimless. Yet the tissues rose and fell as patiently and as regularly as though existence had for them some real, definite end. For three days this uninterrupted pulsation continued; then the heart-beats apparently lost a measure of their intensity. The smaller fragment, apparently wearied, dropped to 90 pulsations a minute; the larger to 40. In a human being a sudden falling off like this would alarm the family physician; Dr. Carrel, however, could apparently play with his "experimental heart" and make it do his will. He "washed" it and gave it a new "medium" to grow in. An hour and a half afterward both fragments sprang into activity, and in a short time were pulsating at a furious rate. The little piece was pounding away with 160 heart-beats to the minute; the large one was following closely with 120. While they were beating they were rapidly growing in size; each had what might be called a case of "enlargement of the heart." As the fragments grew they gradually approached each other, until finally they coalesced and became a single organism. The two hearts, which previously had been pulsating independently, now beat as one. By rejuvenating cardiac tissue in this way, Dr. Carrel has had no difficulty in keeping it alive and frequently functioning for long periods. One specimen lived, grew, and pulsated on the microscopic slide for one hundred and three days. If it had not been



A SPECIMEN OF GROWING TISSUE

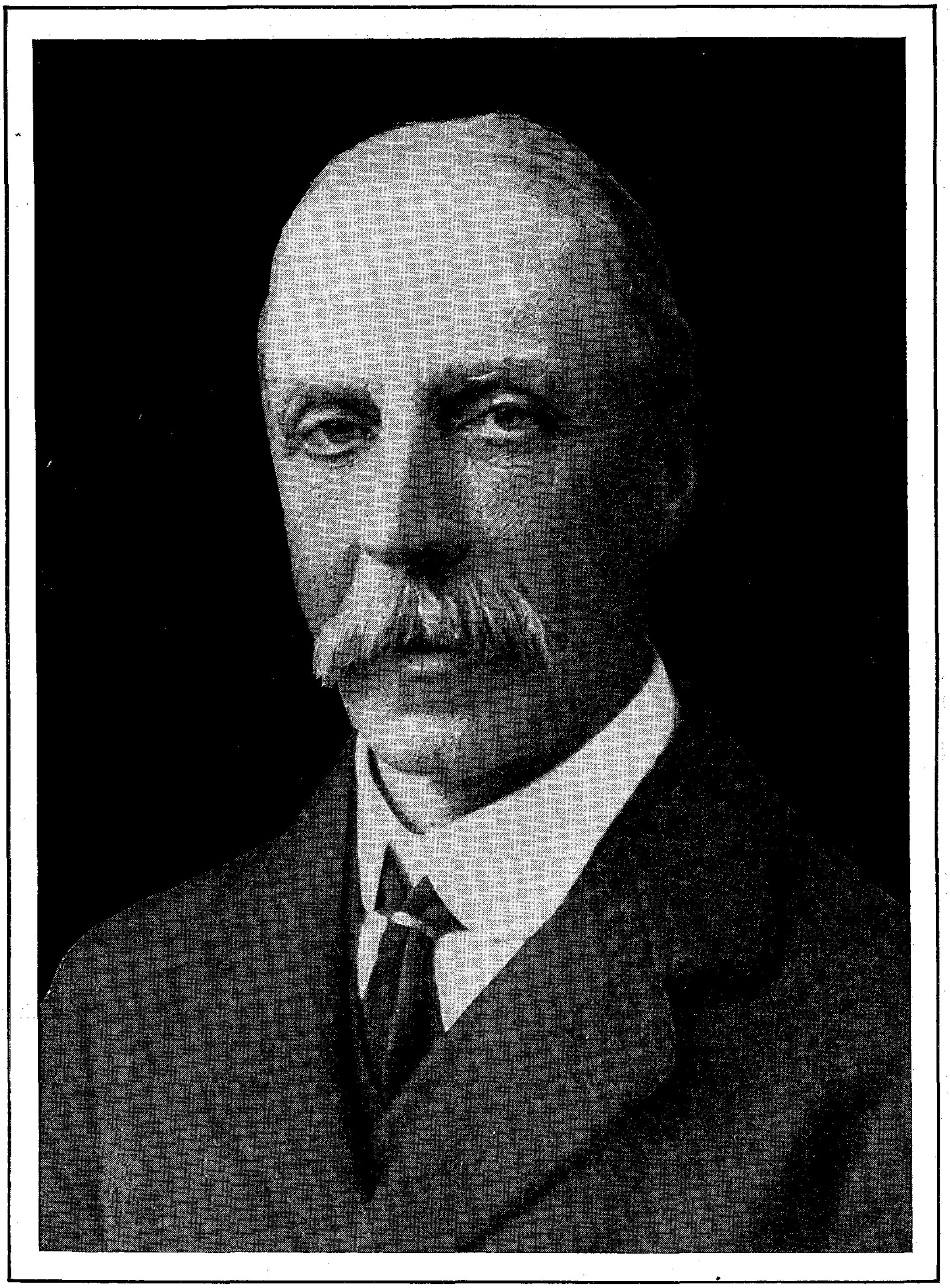


DR. CARREL AT WORK IN HIS LABORATORY AT THE ROCKEFELLER INSTITUTE, STUDYING THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANIMAL CELLS OUTSIDE THE BODY



DR. JACQUES LOEB

THE FOREMOST ADVOCATE OF THE CONCEPTION THAT LIFE IS MERELY A PRODUCT OF CHEMICAL REACTION. "OURSELVES ARE ONLY CHEMICAL MECHANISMS," HE SAYS; "OUR EXISTENCE IS BASED UPON THE PLAY OF BLIND FORCES." HE HAS ALREADY SUCCEEDED IN BRINGING ABOUT CERTAIN LIFE PROCESSES BY CHEMICAL MEANS. "NOTHING INDICATES," HE SAYS, "THAT THE ARTIFICIAL PRODUCTION OF LIVING MATTER IS BEYOND THE POSSIBILITY OF SCIENCE"



PROFESSOR EDWARD A. SCHAEFER

PRESIDENT OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION, WHO, IN HIS RECENT INAUGURAL ADDRESS, EXPRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT ALL LIFE HAS BEEN EVOLVED FROM INORGANIC MATTER. IN THIS ADDRESS HE REFERRED TO DR. CARREL'S EXPERIMENTS IN KEEPING ANIMAL TISSUES ALIVE INDEFINITELY OUTSIDE OF THE BODY AS INDICATING THAT THERE IS NOT A GREAT DIFFERENCE, AFTER ALL, BETWEEN DEAD AND LIVING MATTER accidentally torn by the experimenter, there is every reason to believe that it would be throbbing now. When it reached its sudden and accidental end it was beating fiercely at the rate of 120 pulsations a minute; and was thus broken down in the complete vigor of its youth.

A Cancer Develops Under the Microscope

By using this method Dr. Carrel saw something that the human eye had not looked upon hitherto — a human cancer in an active state of growth. The application of the experiment to the study of this disease was immediately obvious. Cancer, so far as scientists have thus far discovered, arises simply from the senseless proliferation of body cells. For some inscrutable reason, a particular organ or section of the body — the stomach, a mammary gland, a section of the brain or the throat — starts growing. The cancer cell, so far as the laboratory has revealed, does not differ at all from the normal cell; in itself it contains nothing destructive to life. There is a certain mysterious law, known as the law of organization, that holds the body intact and makes every part develop in accordance with the general plan of the organism; our arms, our legs, our fingers, reach a certain size and then stop. Why these particular members should follow this invariable law nobody knows; the one evident thing is that any other regulation would be incompatible with life. Occasionally a particular group of cells will ignore this restraint; they become wild and start off on independent lines of their own. It is these anarchistic tissues that develop into cancerous growths. Scientific men hitherto have had only one experimental method of studying this baffling problem. They have simply cut off pieces of human or animal cancer and placed them under the microscope. In all cases, however, they were studying dead cells; no one had dreamed of looking upon cancer tissue at the very instant of growth.

Dr. Carrel removed a small piece of cancer from a woman thirty-five years old. When placed upon a cover-glass and deposited in the incubator, it soon regained its malignant activity. It was then possible to witness the whole process by which these cells multiply. Under the microscope there is nothing at all hideous about a cancerous growth. The human mind associates everything that is frightful with the disease: in fact, cancer tissue, like normal tissue itself, is really very beautiful. It resembles hoarfrost in the delicacy of its tracery, and crystallizes into a million different shapes. The experimenter was now able to watch this phenomenon taking place under his very eyes. The new cells would start precipitately from the main tissue; they would become spherical in shape, then oval, and then oblong. One end would shoot out, like a microscopic comet, and form a tail; just as quickly, this tail would separate itself from the main body, and perhaps ultimately give birth to new cells of its own.

A careful watch, throughout several weeks, demonstrated several points which may have a marked bearing upon the cancer problem. In the main, cancer tissue, when placed in this artificial medium, grows much more rapidly than in a normal environment. It started more quickly, and, once started, grew faster. Normal tissue began growing in from twelve to forty-eight hours after transplantation; cancerous tissue, in most cases, was revivified within a couple of hours. Does this indicate that there may be substance that stimulates growth in the cancer cell — perhaps a parasite or a microbe — which, when discovered, will yield the secret of the disease?

A New Tool for the Study of Cancer

Again, cancer cells disclosed a remarkable sensitiveness to the medium in which they were placed — in other words, to the food upon which they fed. Dr. Carrel placed one minute segment of cancer in the plasma of the animal from which it had been taken and another in plasma from a normal animal. The first grew much more rapidly — in a short time it had become twenty times as large as the original piece. He then placed a section of a particular kind of tumor — known as sarcoma — in plasma taken from an animal suffering from identically the same disease. In this it grew very little or not at all. This experiment has evidently proved that the body liquids of one cancer patient have a tendency to prevent the growth in another person of the particular kind of cancer from which he suffers. Dr. Carrel, however, makes no claim to having developed any definite facts about this disease; he has simply given investigators all over the world a new tool. Hitherto the scientist could study only cancers artificially produced in animals and dead cancerous tissue. They can now study the active, live disease itself, and particularly the effect of the body fluids upon it.

Cancer, according to the best opinion, is merely a manifestation of that problem which has formed the basis of Dr. Carrel's studies from the first — the problem of growth. His problem, in other words, is the problem of life — of senility and death. Why is it that inorganic matter suddenly puts on all the vestures of vitality? Why does the dead food we take into our mouths all at once quiver into living protoplasm? Whence comes the stimulus that explains the mechanism of life? Why is it that life, having run its allotted course, relapses into senility and death? Are old age and annihilation inevitable? It may seem strange that a piece of chicken tissue, no bigger than a millet seed, reposing quietly in an incubator, should have any bearing upon the subject which has puzzled the human mind for ages; yet it does.

"General" and "Elemental" Death

When the average person uses the word "death" he has a fairly rational conception of what he means. It is the end of personality — the separation of human consciousness from its bodily habitation. "I think, therefore I am," is the philosopher's description of existence; "I do not think, therefore I am not," would probably be the average man's description of death. Connected with this fundamental fact there are, in his mind, certain secondary manifestations. One thinks of the body's destruction — of the grave, of ashes to ashes and dust to dust. Outside of scientific laboratories, there is probably not one man in ten who does not associate these two phenomena together — the end of personality and the disintegration of the body itself. In the popular conception, we die when we cease to breathe and when the heart stops beating; and that, as a consequence, the body itself loses vitality and relapses into the chemical substances of which it was originally composed, one scarcely questions.

Science, however, does not recognize the mere destruction of consciousness as death. In its elaborate catalogue there are several kinds of death. It separates the phenomenon into two grand divisions — into "general" and "elemental" death. By general death it means essentially the same thing that the non-scientific man means by death itself — that is, the passing of the ego. An Italian becomes embroiled in a street fight and a dagger is plunged through his heart. He falls, stops breathing, and his heart ceases its pulsations; in a newspaper paragraph the next day the man is described as "dead." In the eye of science, however, he is only "generally" dead. His murderous enemy may pay the penalty of his crime in the electric chair, but he has really killed only a very small part of his victim. In the sense of elemental death, every fiber of the man's being may be quivering with life. For an appreciable period after his "death" his skin is just as much alive and just as serviceable as it was before. His internal organs, if they could be taken out of his body and placed in their familiar environment in another man, would go on and function for years. In other words, "general" death — the passing of personality — does not necessarily involve "elemental" death — the disintegration of the cell. Unless the cellular tissues are rescued from the body and given a new living environment, they too will really die. Dr. Carrel's earliest experiments, now so generally used in practical surgery, showed how, by placing bodily tissues in cold storage, they could be kept indefinitely in a state of suspended animation. His latest, described above, showed how, by removing these tissues from the dead body and giving them food and heat, they would not only survive the shock of general death, but would actually resume all the characteristics of active life, including growth and function.

"Accidental" and "Natural" Death

Analyzing somewhat more minutely, discriminating science recognizes again two forms of both "general" and "elemental" death. These are "accidental" and "natural" death. The supposititious Italian referred to above, for example, died an accidental death. There was no essential reason why, in the general state of his bodily organism, he should have died at the particular moment that he did. Had he passed along the street five minutes before, or had any one of a thousand other circumstances happened differently, he would be alive and well to-day. Now, the great mass of deaths, among men and animals, are of precisely this kind; that is, they are accidental. We do not all die from dagger thrusts, or in earthquakes or railroad wrecks; but, from the standpoint of nature, nearly all deaths are just as violent. They are caused by circumstances not inherent in the conditions of the body itself. The death-dealing attack comes, not from within, but from without. Nearly all human beings die from disease, and, as all diseases are theoretically avoidable, nearly every one thus dies an accidental death. The most destructive cause is microbic infection. Air, water, and food are filled with untold billions of microscopic enemies; now and then science cages and subdues a particular species, but their annual toll in human lives is still enormous. That they cause the well known infectious diseases is clearly demonstrated; to what extent they may be responsible for other diseases not generally put down as infectious — such as lesions of the internal organs — is still only a matter of speculation. Wherever a microörganism causes death, however, that death is just as accidental as those which are caused by a bullet or a stroke of lightning.

What Is the Cause of Natural Death?

Apparently, however, all living things die from other than accidental causes. There is a rare form of death among human beings popularly described as "old age." When a man or a woman has covered a particular span of life, certain degenerative changes set in. The hair whitens, the skin shrivels up, the teeth fall out, the eyes become dim, bodily movement becomes slow and hesitating, the mind acts slowly. So far as the doctors are able to diagnose, the patient is suffering from no particular disease; he is simply "old." Finally the man passes peacefully and painlessly away; he has died of "old age." His death, according to the scientific classification given above, is a "natural" one. Such deaths are extremely rare; certain investigators, indeed, have denied that there is ever a well substantiated case of "natural" death. The best scientific opinion, however, is that the phenomenon does now and then take place. As to the direct cause there are several opinions. Some, failing to find any physical explanation, take refuge in metaphysics. There is a "death principle," just as there is a "life principle"; death, they insist, is the inevitable sequence of life. There is a certain mysterious and impalpable "germ of death" inherent in every body cell. To the modern scientist, talk of this kind is absolutely meaningless. There must be a physical explanation for senility and death. Metchnikoff, the great Russian zoölogist, believes that natural death is caused by poisons generated in the digestive tract — an explanation which virtually eliminates "natural" death itself and makes it in all cases "accidental." Another idea is that senile degeneration is caused by the fact that the body cells lose the power to reproduce. The animal body is constantly breaking down and building up; the cells everywhere are constantly dying and being replaced by new; that the human organism is entirely rejuvenated every seven years is a popular aphorism. This cellular activity is most marked in early life. The cells of the embryo grow with an amazing rapidity; in childhood and youth they are in a high state of activity. As life goes on, however, the vitality of the cell diminishes; the body replaces dead cells with greater difficulty; and ultimately it seems to lose this power entirely. When this point is reached, according to this theory, death ensues as a natural and unavoidable consequence.

Death Really the Result of Cellular Suicide

The question still remains, however, as to why the cells lose this reproductive power with advancing years. The explanation usually accepted is that the cells create certain toxins or poisons that cause their own destruction. We die, that is, from certain substances technically known as the "products of metabolism." Natural death, when it happens, is a form of cellular suicide; the individual cells, all over the body, are busily manufacturing substances which, like microscopic Frankensteins, will ultimately destroy them. That this process goes on in lower living organisms is a demonstrated fact. When Pasteur was making his famous experiments in fermentation, he discovered that the lactic-acid bacillus — the microörganism which causes the curding or "souring" of milk — regularly produced a poison which destroyed the bacillus itself. The best scientific opinion is that death in the animal world, when it is not what is commonly described as accidental, has a similar cause.

In Certain Organisms Death Is Unknown

We have been so commonly taught for ages to regard death as a fixed fact that it is something of a surprise to discover certain forms of living matter in which it is unknown. There are well known microscopic animals that never die. These are of the type known as "unicellular" organisms — organisms, that is, that consist of a single cell. These cells, left entirely to themselves, exhibit no signs of senility. When they have lived the allotted span, they do not die; they simply divide. In place of one cell we have two, and the vanished organism lives in two fresh descendants. Each of these descendants divides in its turn — and so it goes on indefinitely. If the body of a man, having reached maturity or "old age," should suddenly divide into two splendid and vigorous youths, human existence would resemble that of these "unicellular" organisms. The human race would not leave behind it an interminable succession of dead bodies, any more than does this microscopic race. There are also certain high forms of plant life that show no signs of death. The famous Sequoia trees in California have already lived several thousand years; from present indications they will live indefinitely, unless "accidental" death, in the form of a tornado or a woodman's ax, causes them to collapse.

It is necessary to keep in mind this phenomenon of "natural" death, and its probable causes, to understand completely the significance of Dr. Carrel's experiments. He found that the normal existence of the cell, when grown outside the body, followed precisely the same cycle as when it developed within. It had its period of youth, of maturity, of senility, of decay and death. Taken fresh from the embryo of a chick, his tissue at first vegetated luxuriantly; in the course of time, however, the cells began to lose their reproductive power, finally ceased altogether, and died. As the experimenter had entirely protected them from infection from microbes, and as the food supply was still abundant, the cells had died from neither disease nor starvation. The death, that is, had not been accidental; it was "natural," and unquestionably a case of death from "old age." The cells on the microscopic slide, precisely as the cells in the human body, had probably created those poisons that had ultimately destroyed them. What these substances are, or may be, no one can even guess. The human eye has never seen them, and probably never will, as no microscope has been invented that can reveal them.

Immortality of the Cell

Dr. Carrel had not proceeded far with his experiments, however, before he discovered that, in one important respect, these artificially grown cells differed from those that normally develop within the body. The rejuvenation of the worn-out human organism has been the age-long dream of medicine and philosophy. Even scientific men — the latest of whom was the great French physiologist, Brown-Sequard — have joined in the search for an elixir of youth. In the mind of most people, however, the idea is usually placed side by side with that other great delusion of the middle ages, the philosopher's stone. Certainly all attempts to transmute enfeebled and crabbed old age into luxuriant youth, to make the jaded human eye regain its luster and the wearied muscular organism its activity, have been grotesque failures. The death and destruction of the animal cell has been regarded as a strongly established scientific and theological axiom. But Dr. Carrel's experiments challenge even this fundamental truth. That death is inevitably the allotted portion of the cell as long as it remains within the body — this fact the experimenter is not prepared to dispute; that death is the natural end of this same animal cell, when taken from the body and placed in selected surroundings, however, is not at all true.

An embryo chick, for example, if permitted to live its natural life, will ultimately die of "old age." This same chick, if dissected into many fragments and placed on microscopic slides under prescribed conditions, will live forever. Its "personality" will be extinct, but "elemental" death, or the death of the cell, need not necessarily occur. The animal cell itself is apparently immortal. The elixir of youth, so far as protoplasm is concerned, is no longer a dream, but a reality.

The significant fact, in the bearing of this experiment on the general life problem, is that this rejuvenation is produced artificially. The individual cell, as already described, if left to itself, behaves outside the body precisely the same as it does within — it has its babyhood, its youth, its maturity, its period of senility, and finally its death. On the cover-glass it apparently produces those poisons, those "products of metabolism," which ultimately destroy it, just as it produces them within the body. Clearly, if we wish to prevent this degeneration or to restore vitality once degeneration has set in, the way to do it is to remove the cause. The problem, therefore, was to free the cell from these self-generated and death-dealing poisons.

"Tissue Juice" as an Elixir of Youth

Dr. Carrel did this in a way that seems simplicity itself. He took his specimen of tissue, when it was unquestionably marked with death, and first gave it a bath. In more technical language, it "underwent a passage"; which means that, after having been taken from its medium, it was washed for a few minutes in a laboratory solution. Probably this had the effect of freeing it, to a considerable extent, from the poison; in itself, however, this proceeding did not accomplish the resuscitation. It was only when the newly washed tissue was embedded in a new "medium" that it suddenly began to grow again. Instead of giving it pure plasma, as before, Dr. Carrel modified this plasma by mixing it with new chemical substances. The elixir that accomplished these results was a liquid substance known technically as "tissue" or embryonic juice." When the experimenter added this magical substance to his apparently exhausted specimen of tissue, it suddenly sprang into the wildest vegetation. The growth continued for a time; then the tissue again showed signs of lassitude. It was gradually losing the power of putting forth new cells; was once more giving unmistakable signs of "old age." Evidently it was forming new "metabolic products," and again making preparations for death. Just before the "last enemy" definitely appeared, however, Dr. Carrel again removed this tissue from the incubator, gave it another bath, and placed it in a new medium. Immediately the cells renewed their youth, and started anew the life cycle. Again decrepitude appeared, again the tissue was invigorated and restored to its youthful prime. Dr. Carrel found that he could continue this operation indefinitely. He has tissue in his laboratory which has gone through the life cycle ninety-five times. The cells are far more vigorous now than they were when the experiment began, and, so far as at present appears, there seems no reason to believe that they can not be kept alive indefinitely.

Tissue Becomes Younger the Older It Is

Perhaps the most remarkable fact, indeed, is that the tissue apparently increases in strength and activity with each "passage." The older the tissue becomes, the faster it grows. In other words, its youth increases with its age. A well known French scientist, Dr. M. S. Pozzi, who lectured on these experiments a few months ago before the Academy of Medicine in Paris, described the whole proceeding as the "alternating life of the tissues." "Any commentary of mine," he said at the end of his discourse, "is hardly necessary to emphasize the importance of these experiments. Anything that I could say, indeed, would be altogether too feeble. For this demonstration — that life can be maintained indefinitely outside the organism — has the greatest possible significance from the standpoint both of biology and philosophy."

These experiments naturally range Dr. Carrel upon the side of those scientists who believe that life is purely a matter of chemistry; that there is no such thing as "vitalism," but that all living phenomena have a natural and ascertainable explanation. He has not created life, it is true; but, by purely chemical processes, he has been able to rejuvenate a dying cell and keep it indefinitely alive. He has not demonstrated that life itself can be created chemically, but he has practically shown that immortality is merely a question of a chemical reaction. The greatest living exponent of this "mechanistic conception of life" is Jacques Loeb, Dr. Carrel's colleague at the Rockefeller laboratories. "Nothing indicates at present," said Professor Loeb, "that the artificial production of living matter is beyond the possibility of science." Dr. Loeb, in many fascinating experiments, has shown the effects of chemical changes in the sea water upon the development of sea animals. By treating the eggs of sea-urchins with water of greater saltiness than that found in the sea, he has greatly increased their rate of development. Several years ago Dr. Loeb proved that certain essential processes, without which science has long since decreed that life was impossible, could be accomplished by chemical means. Up to that time, for example, the union of the sexes had been regarded as an essential preliminary to the production of nearly all forms of animal life. Dr. Loeb upset this well established idea by producing certain marine animals, such as sea-urchins and starfish, from unfertilized eggs. All that he had to do was to dip these germ cells into salt water of a somewhat stronger intensity than normal sea water, and they immediately began to develop into swimming larvae. These sea-urchins, that is, were fatherless; they had only a single parent, the mother; the part in generation usually played by the male was performed quite as acceptably by a chemical agent — in this case salt. In many other similar experiments, Dr. Loeb has demonstrated that the medium in which the animal grows can bring about tremendous changes. He has even shown how the phenomenon of twins (in sea-urchins) can be produced by chemical processes.

"It may be assumed," says Dr. Carrel, in discussing the bearing of this experiment upon this general problem, "that the facts discovered by Loeb in the lower marine organisms are the expression of general laws which control the development of the tissues and organs of the higher animals as well. . . . The growth of the tissues of animals is probably controlled by the conditions of the interstitial lymph, in the same way that the growth of the egg of the sea-urchin is influenced by the conditions of the sea water."

Can the Body as a Whole be Rejuvenated?

Each one can speculate for himself upon the ultimate practical bearing of these discoveries. Animal cells, when treated chemically, are apparently immortal. But the human body is simply a universe of such cells. If each minute individual part of us is imperishable, does it necessarily follow that the aggregation can be artificially maintained in a condition of everlasting youth? Are the real waters of eternal life certain liquid substances, like Dr. Loeb's salt solution for sea-urchins and Dr. Carrel's laboratory solution for animal tissue, which, when artificially conveyed to the cells, will destroy the "metabolic products" that cause "old age" and "natural" death? Will human existence, like that of these animal cells on the cover-glass, ultimately resolve itself into periods of youth and old age, and then youth and old age again, and so on indefinitely? Will human life resemble the tree whose leaves bloom in May and wither in November, only to put on new life again with the return of the spring?

Different Media Needed for Different Tissues

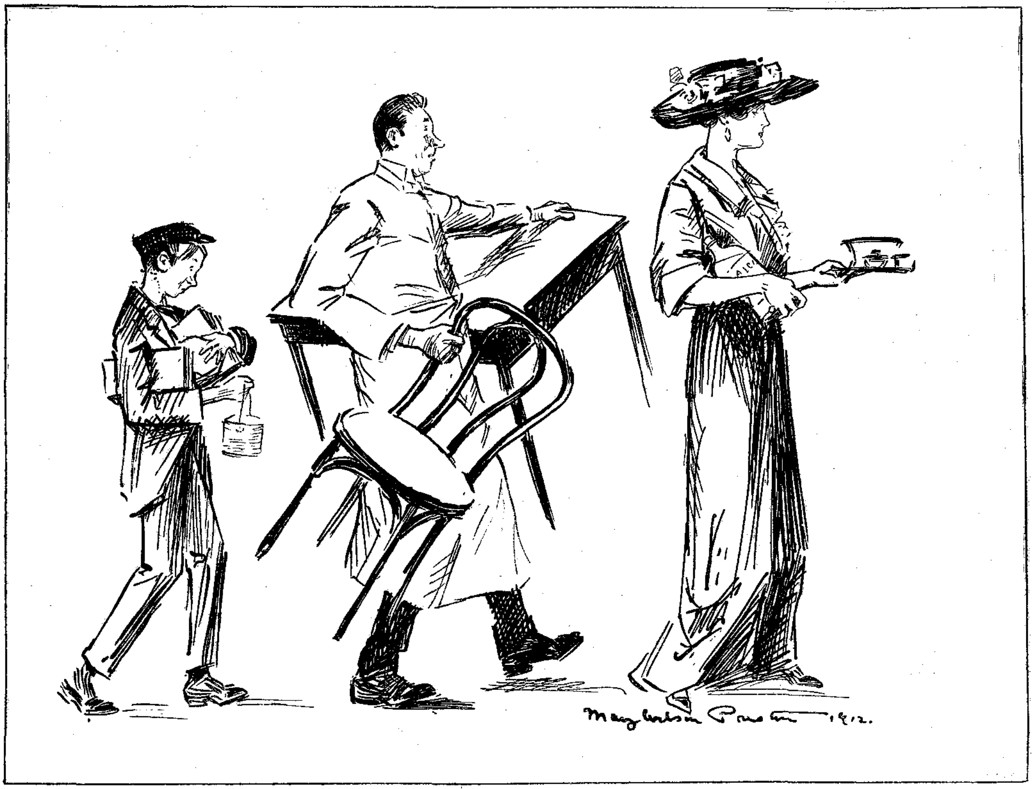
This is certainly an interesting idea to play with; theoretically, indeed, there seems no scientific reason why the miracle should not be realized. Certain practical difficulties, however, are already apparent. Dr. Carrel has discovered that certain proportions of distilled water in the "medium" rejuvenate certain tissue, such as the spleen, the heart, and the liver of the embryo chick. He found, however, that the same proportions of distilled water that "activated" the spleen did not produce the same effect upon the heart and liver. Again, that certain proportions of salt stimulated skin tissues, while it had no effect upon other organs. These variations seemed to indicate that each kind of animal tissue had a particular kind of medium in which it would grow best. Let us take the human body, for example. If Dr. Carrel's theory is correct, one medium would revivify the heart, another the liver, another the nervous system, another the skin, and so on. As the body contains an almost endless variety of cells, an almost endless variety of media would have to be injected. Even though other difficulties did not present themselves, as they unquestionably would, the human mind would soon get lost in the complexity of this problem.

It is not impossible, however, that the discovery may have certain practical applications. It is not unlikely that experimentation may discover the media in which certain human tissues — skin, bone, heart, nerves, liver, and so on — grow most luxuriantly. Under these conditions degenerated organs may possibly be strengthened and perhaps made over. Nerves are a particular case in point. There is an actual degeneration of nervous tissue in certain nervous diseases; if the *optimum medium* for nerve cells is discovered, it is not impossible that the worn-out, harassed nerves of the American business man may be rejuvenated. In the healing of wounds this idea might likewise offer great relief. Surgeons are constantly having trouble over the slowness of healing, and an artificial method of stimulation, such as that suggested by these experiments, is one of the greatest desiderata of practical medicine.

A New Type — a "Visceral Organism"

Dr. Carrel is already pushing his discoveries into new fields. From proving that groups of cells can live and function outside the body, the next step is logical; that is, to show that whole organs can exist under the same circumstances. As a result of this ambition, Dr. Carrel has already developed what might almost be said to be a new type of animal; this is a "visceral organism." He removed from a cat all its essential organs,— the heart, the lungs, the liver, the kidneys, the stomach, the omentum, and the intestines,— and placed them in a laboratory solution. Immediately this "visceral organism" started into life. The lungs, having been artificially supplied with air through a tube, began to rise and fall gently, the heart started its pulsations, pushing the blood naturally through the arteries, the stomach and intestines continued the digestive proceeding, the kidneys and the bladder resumed their normal functions. In other words, here was a cat, separated from its brain and "personality," performing practically all its normal functions! The cat itself had experienced "general" death; but the rest of its organism was just as active, just as alive, and just as useful as it had been in the animal itself. From a surgical standpoint, this operation was little less than a miracle. Dr. Carrel for years has kept organs in cold storage in a state of suspended animation; he has now shown that he can keep organs outside the body in a state of active, functioning life. This is the final achievement in a series of experiments extending over six years. As a result, medical students of the future will be able to study bodily functions with all the working organisms virtually in their hands.

A remarkable new Burns story will appear in the February McClure's — *out January 15*


May Wilson Preston 1912.

THE QUEEN OF THE SLACK WIRE

BY HELEN GREEN VAN CAMPEN

AUTHOR OF "ONE DAY IN VAUDEVILLE," "LIFE ON BROADWAY," ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MAY WILSON PRESTON

Helen Green Van Campen is in the first rank of American humorists. She has discovered a new world of romance — the world of vaudeville, with its fascinatingly queer people and its amazing adventures. She knows intimately the people whom most of us see only over the footlights, and she writes about them with captivating wit. Beginning with "The Queen of the Slack Wire," all of her newest and best stories will appear in McCLURE'S *during 1913.*

MILLIE LAVERNE, "Queen of the Slack Wire," watched the stage-hands of Murphy's Ocean Beach Music Hall fumbling with the ornate steel structure which added to her regal professional condition.

"Gee, but you're a handy bunch!" she said bitterly. "Gimme some stage-screws and I'll set up my own apparatus, if it's goin' to take all day. Are the regular grips on strike?"

Her insult excited the four men who pulled and argued. A heavy steel brace got away from the one who pulled hardest, the others yelled, and a convenient hero dragged the Queen of the Slack Wire away as the brace clanged on the spot where she had stood. She limply raised her head from a bright pink plaited shirt bosom, first scratching her cheek on a large diamond stud. Her black eyes blinked into the gray eyes of Sam Loring. It was an introduction.

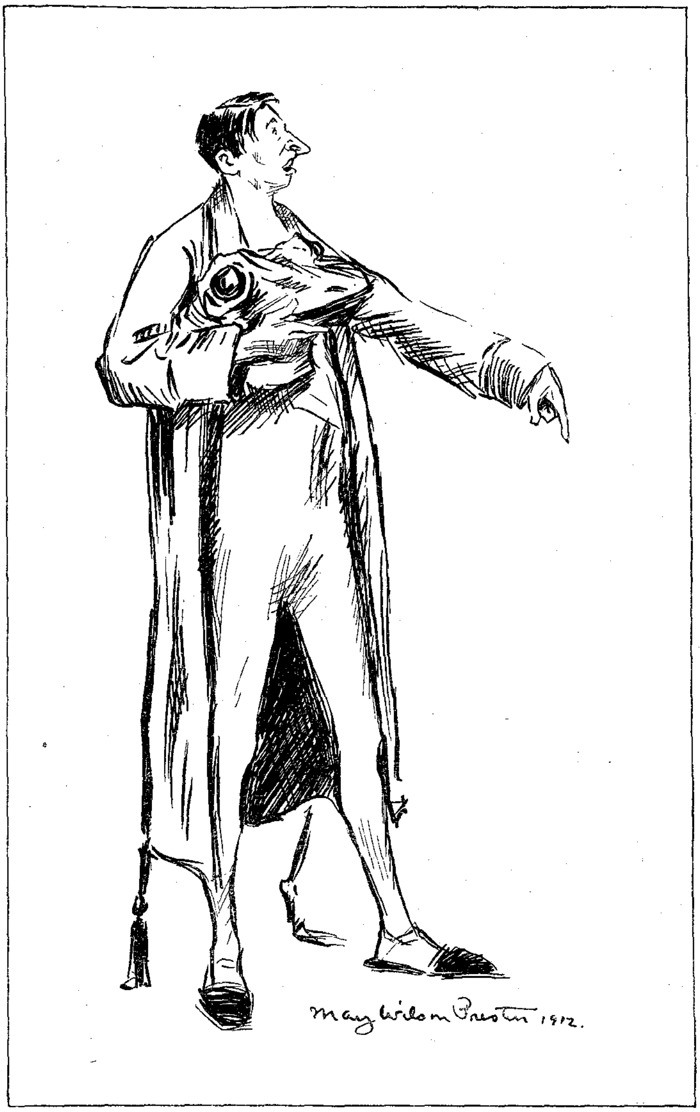
"Gee!" she gasped.

"Guess we left just in time," said Sam, righting her deftly.

"It's the first faintin' I ever did, 'cause I ain't that kind of a girl," said Millie. "But it serves me right for ever signin' to play vaudeville. I'm a circus act, an' they know what they're doin', there."

"Us guys are all awful sorry, Miss Laverne," said the least expert stage-hand humbly.

Another declared, with honest emotion, that he had never harmed a woman yet, and was willing, if required, to take his Bible oath that he never would. The third man mumbled, the fourth anxiously observed that accidents would happen.



"'WHO TOOK MY MAT?' CRIED THE MAN FROG. 'I WANT THAT THERE MAT, AND I WANT IT NOW—SEE?'"

"She knows that, boys. You needn't be afraid of this little lady makin' a roar to the old man. Only holler to her before the next one drops," said Sam Loring jovially.

He smiled on them, and on Millie, and the hot reproof her lips had been forming evaporated. She spoke graciously to the stage-hands, who warily resumed their struggles. Sam rested a hand where the diamond of his ring would glitter; Millie edged toward a light that would display the diamond alligator whose every sparkle had cost a slide upon the slack wire.

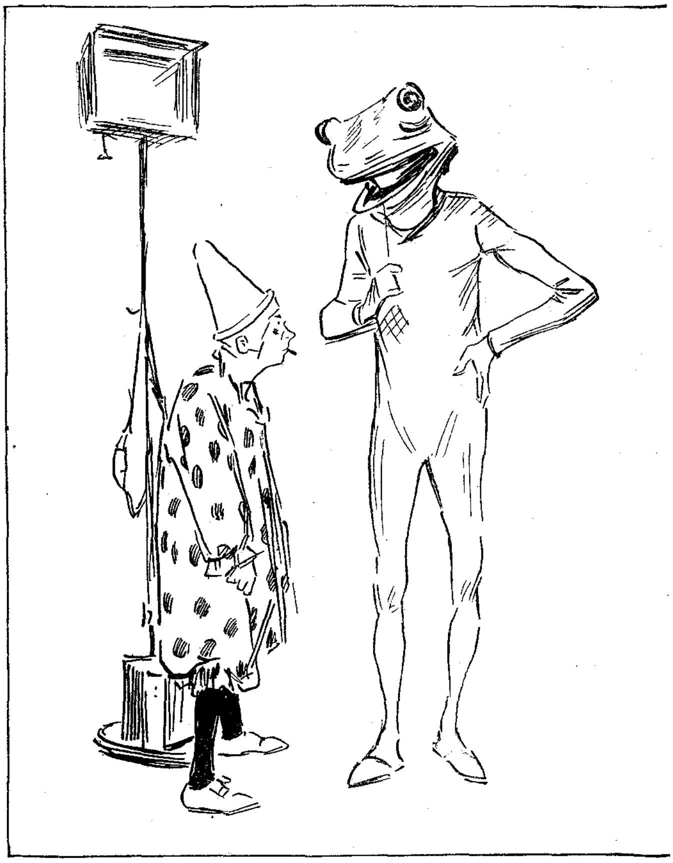
"A party used to circus work is up against it on these stages," said Millie. "Are you playin' here this week?"

"I guess you follow us," Sam answered. "Loring an' Loring, you know. We're a musical turn. I had trouble with the leader at rehearsal this mornin'—he was goin' to teach *me* how to play piano!"

Millie became convinced that the leader was an officious impostor.

"The very idea!" she exclaimed. "Oh, you meet a fresh lot in vaudeville! Of course, if they gimme a galop for my finish and a waltz right through the act, I'm all right; still, I don't believe in lettin' 'em be the boss. It shows a lack of character."

Sam nodded. They remained in a warm silence. Millie was regretting that thrift had suggested the wearing of her old crimson taffeta, when a new blue charmeuse with a much tighter and more fashionable skirt was in her theater-trunk. Sam reflected that dark red and a big round straw hat with red roses was delight-



"THE MAN FROG WAS THOROUGHLY ENGROSSED. 'SIX BOWS HER TOPPIN' BILLS

ful with black eyes and carefully curled black hair. A wad of black braid lay in the nape of her white neck. Her teeth were small and white, her arms, in short plain sleeves, were strong but rounded, and it gladdened Sam that her elbows were soft-looking. He preferred women who gave some thought to elbows. So he looked up — because he was stocky and short and she had to be tall to carry so ably her hundred and seventy pounds — and, being a convert to action, he said abruptly:

"What do you say to ridin' down to the Oriental for dinner to-night? Their steamed clams are swell."

"W-with you?" she asked.

"With me," said Sam firmly.

"An' have every act on the bill carryin' it back to N' Yawk that I et with a fella I never saw before? I better not go. It wouldn't look well."

"How'd they know we ain't old pals?" he demanded. "Be above worryin' over anybody, as long as you're bein' a lady. *That's* showin' character."

An artist billed as "the Man Frog," whose humble mission was to "open the show" with a contortion act, charged past them.

"Who took my mat?" he cried. "I want that there mat, and I want it now — see? The last time I worked here I come near hurtin' myself, an' all from my mat bein' drug from under me by some amachur comedian. I want to see that mat in place!"

"Here it is." The speaker unrolled a heavy mat. Mollified, the Man Frog drew his bathrobe about his lean green legs.

"What's doin', Sammy?"

"Nothing," replied Sam, so coldly that the Man Frog inspected Millie more closely than he had intended. He was as tall as she, a lath of a man with a bull-frog voice and a friendly smile.

"I hate a Monday mat'nee," said he. "Is this Mis' Loring, Sammy? I'd like to be introduced."

He looked cordially at Millie, who blushed like a non-professional.

"Naw, it ain't Mis' Loring, McGinness," said Sam. "It's Miss — ah ——"

He signaled Millie, who whispered "Laverne!"

"Miss Averne," said Sam glibly. "Meet Mr. McGinness, Miss Averne."

"Pleased to meet you," said the Man Frog. "Pleasant workin' by the sea, eh? There's the overture! I'll see you folks later. Here, boys, up stage with my mat — over here!"

A scrape of feet on the other side of the curtain, coughs — then the overture hushed these noises.

"It's *Laverne!*" said Millie, giggling. "An' I won't be able to go, thankin' you just the same, Mr. Loring."

Sam pursued her through the narrow spaces between "flats" of scenery.

"But listen, girlie," he entreated, and boldly clutched a fold of the crimson gown. That stopped her.

"Will you to-morrow night? You'll have known me a long while by then!"

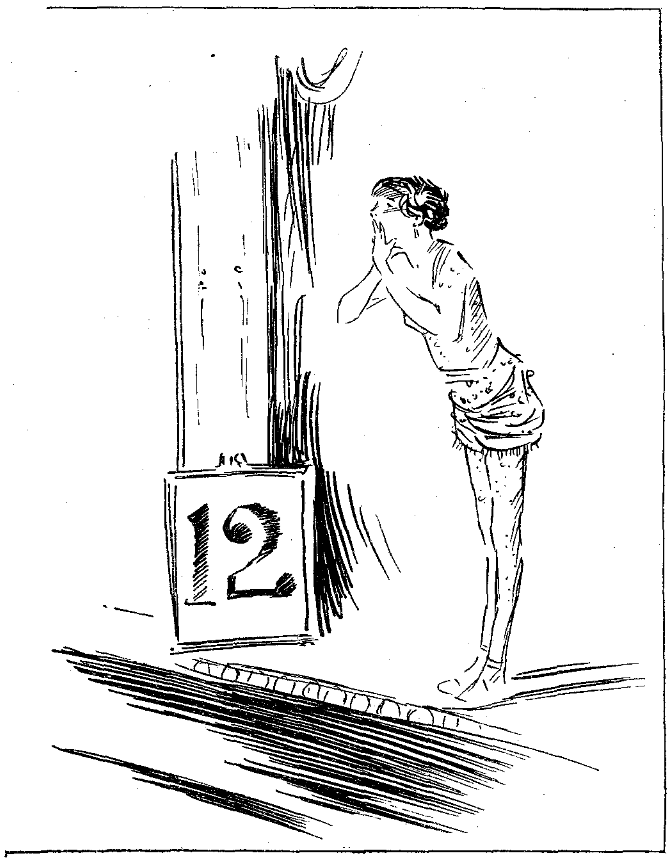
"If you go on like this with all the women you meet, you oughta be ashamed of yourself!"

"But *will* you?"

"Yes!" said Millie. "Now you leave go my dress. Didn't I say I would?"

He held the fold more securely. The orchestra's music was louder and livelier.

"They're playin' 'Beautiful Doll,'" he said



ON A MONDAY!' HE MARVELED. 'A GOOD PRESS AGENT 'D HAVE IN A WEEK'"

eagerly. "Hear it? An' that's what you are — a great big beautiful doll!"

The Queen of the Slack Wire was in her white silk tights, with every spangle in place. She had written her weekly letter to her parents in Corsicana, Texas, inclosing her weekly money-order. The rabbit's foot without which she would not have commenced the tamest aërial performance was pinned into the black braid that now circled her head. She scrutinized a program of the week. The last page held numbers eleven and twelve.

"Loring and Loring, in a musical mélange." And below:

"Mlle. Laverne, Queen of the Slack Wire."

Millie had been Bertha when she left Corsicana. The abbreviation of "Mademoiselle" puzzled certain of her professional comrades who had failed to achieve linguistic excellence. To their eyes it seemed to be "Millie," and, as its present wearer had only read this title before some former circus queen's name, she thought so too.

After approving the type allotted her, she meditated earnestly. She knew the "house" was small to-day, which dis pointed her. But night would bring a crowd. If Sam Loring played, probably the other Loring — his brother, she supposed — would sing. What was their salary? Millie felt that Sam's must be a high-class specialty. He "wore diamonds," and spoke calmly of steamed clams at the Oriental. And his forceful air was attractive. He wasn't little; he was short — short and strong. Her blue gown was handsome enough for the Oriental, and with her alligator, and long white gloves ——

"Time, Mr. Loring!" said the call-boy outside.

A deep voice from an opposite room answered. Millie blushed so vividly that she hurriedly felt her face in fear of her make-up melting.

"Thank mercy, there's only three women on the bill, or I'd have some one in here, rubberin' an' askin' if I was daffy — an' I guess I am, gettin' red in the face. You big fool!" said Millie to the painted Millie in the glass. "He ain't anything to you, is he? I should say not!"

She placed the alligator more conspicuously.

"'Big beautiful doll,' indeed! He can't con me. It's funny — when Birdie MacIntyre told my fortune up to their flat, she said I'd marry a musician. Not that I will. Still, sometimes the cards are right."

An open window in the property-room brought coolness. A breeze back stage! It was delightful.

"Meet you down at the bath-house. Get a suit for me," said one of the Bronxville Comedy Four. The shouts of bathers on the beach below reached Millie.

"That water looks good," observed the Four's second tenor. "Going in, between shows?"

"I believe I will," said Millie, and she thought: "*He'll* take me."

"Who's on now?" she asked, and heard that Loring and Loring were about to appear. Millie found a place in the first entrance. Sam Loring was at the piano, executing a medley previously announced as "my own composition." His eyes sent her a message, and she smiled consciously. He was in evening clothes, his blond hair brushed straight back from his forehead. There was very little make-up on his heavy-jawed face.

"I'm goin' to ring in 'Beautiful Doll,'" he called softly, "an' you know what I told you!"

"You better stop your kiddin'," she retorted.

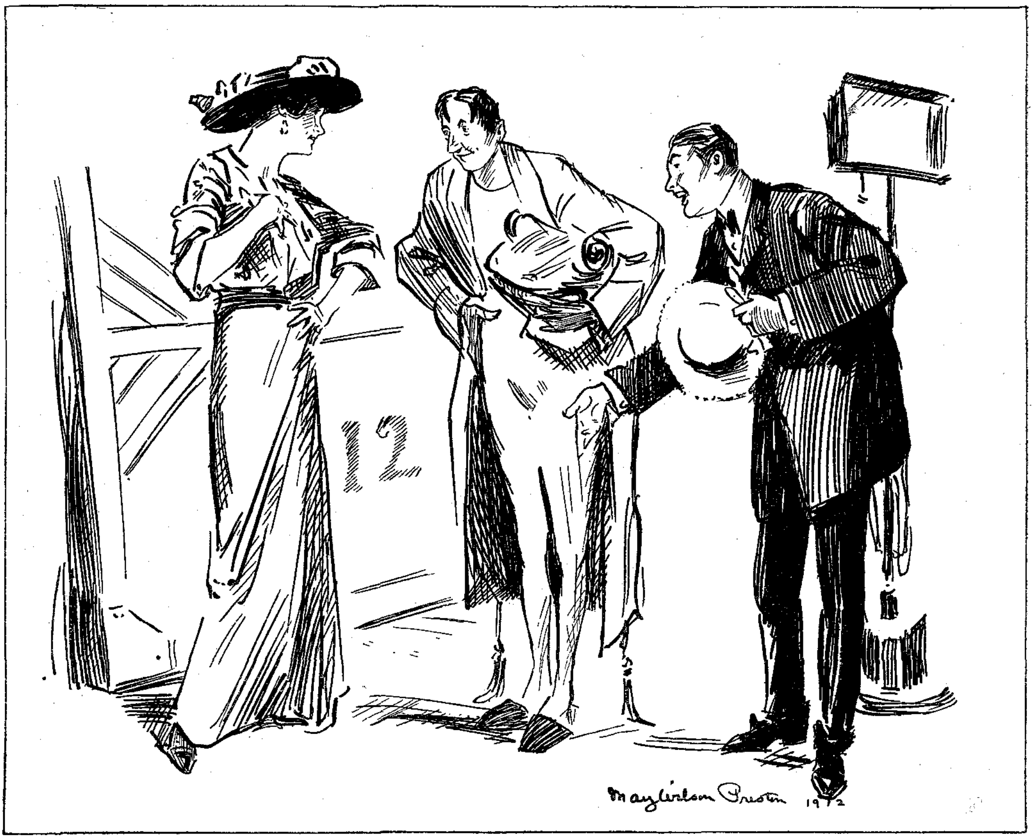
"He's the limit," she thought. She was smiling in delicious confusion when her glance encountered the other half of Loring and Loring. Sam was ending with a tremendous clamor of rag-time, and when he skilfully interpolated "Beautiful Doll" he looked for Millie, and saw only an interested property-man.

"Who's that — that *woman?*" the property-man had heard.

"Her? Mrs. Loring," said he. "And they say she's one peach of a singer."

When he turned, Millie had gone.

Standing beside her apparatus, she listened to Loring and Loring as they sang and played. Once Sam rushed by for a "change," reappearing in white flannels and white shoes. Thrice the small, blonde Mrs. Loring hurled herself behind the screen placed in an entrance, where a dresser waited with a fresh costume. There are not many recalls on a Monday afternoon, and, at the final blare of the comedy duet in brass, Millie threw off her blue kimono. The clapping ceased. She was aware of Mrs. Loring passing, of Sam stationary on the spot that Millie herself had so briefly occupied. The drop went up, and, skipping on, superb in her white spangled tights, she bowed. The audience clapped a little. Millie smiled confidently at them, and walked to the first entrance, where Sam was.



"'PLEASED TO MEET YOU,' SAID THE MAN FROG. 'PLEASANT WORKIN' BY THE SEA, EH?'"

"You didn't see our act at all," he complained.

"Kindly git back. I work out of here," she commanded haughtily.

Sam moved, hurt by her tone, and suddenly Millie's trim heels were where her head had been. Over she went, agilely completing what the rural districts know as "somersets" and tumbling artists describe as a "row of flips." She righted herself and bowed. A stout woman in a stage-box exclaimed:

"I guess that'll convince you a big woman can do a few things, Henry."

Millie climbed nimbly to her platform. A stage-hand brought her a ruffled white parasol, and she slid out upon the wire. She slipped,—to increase the interest,—and the stout woman gasped. She darted back and forth.

"The Texas Toddle!" she said clearly, and the wire leaped under a dance-step.

"Try this when you get home," she advised, and turned a "back flip," landing safely.

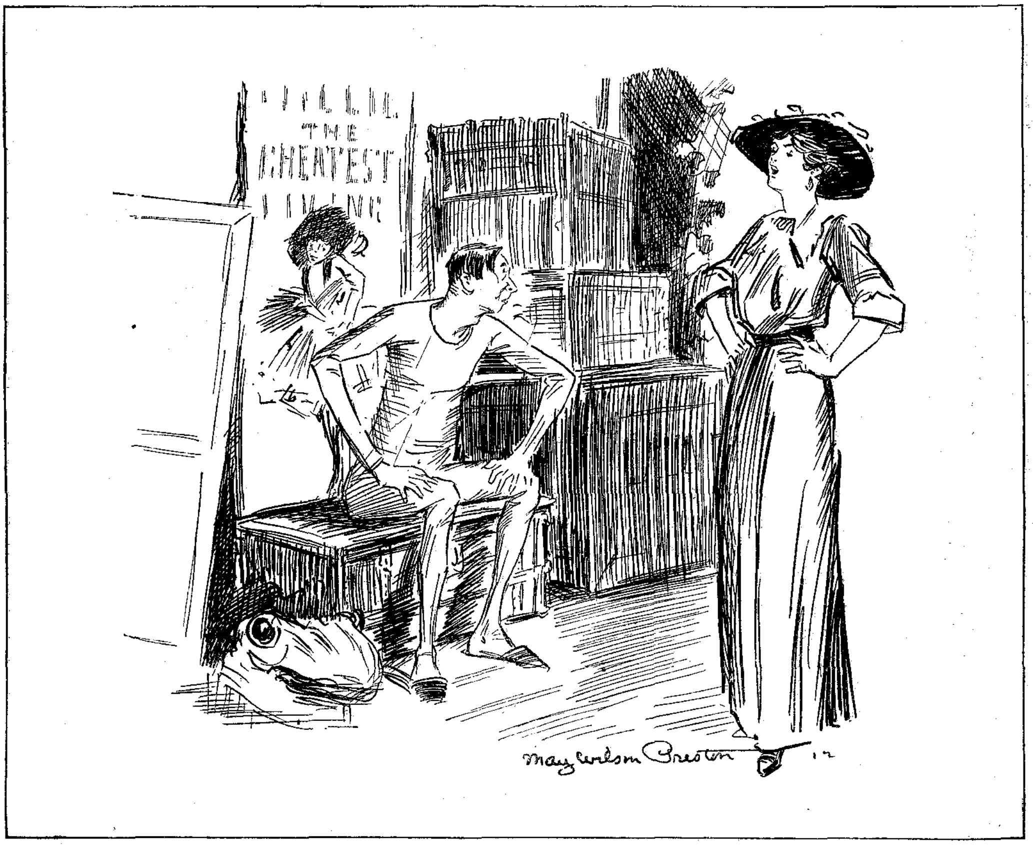
"She ought to be grabbin' five hundred a week, an' I'll bet she ain't drawin' over seventy-five," said Sam.

act, but the audience liked her, and she h to please them. She ran down the steps, panting, bowed, and made her exit.

"Six bows on a *Monday*," marveled the Man Frog.

He sat on the steps leading from the stage-door when she came out in street clothes. Sam was close behind her.

"But what have I done?" he insisted. "I was hopin' you'd go into the water. They got nice suits for ladies."



"'THAT'LL BE ABOUT ALL FROM YOU, AN' I SCORN YOUR INSINUATIONS!'"

The Man Frog had returned to watch her, and he was thoroughly engrossed.

"I was a plain sucker not to take up wire work," he said enviously. "A good press agent'd have her toppin' bills in a week."

"That's what she needs, the right kind of managin'," Sam agreed.

Millie signaled the alert leader.

"Catch me with the drums for each jump," she reminded him.

The orchestra played a galop, she poised herself, and jumped—then back, and forward again, the wire vibrating madly under her sure balancing. She danced, and whirled, and turkey-trotted. A last flip; another, not in the

"Le's all go," said the lean Man Frog briskly. "She don't have to swim any."

"Come on—won't you?" Sam urged.

The Man Frog's pointing hand lured her glance to the frolicking hundreds fighting the sun-lit breakers.

"I'm a good swimmer—you kin put a cap over your hair, too. It's lots of fun. Say yes, now—come on!"

"P'r'aps you'd rather go with McGinness," said Sam ominously.

"Yes, I would," said Millie, "an' I cancel that dinner date. You had your nerve to ever ask me!"

"Nerve? Ain't I been a gentleman? I certainly tried to be."

She gave a high, artificial laugh. "I'm ready, Mr. McGinness," said she, her crimson silk back to Sam.

The Man Frog led her toward the board walk. He was elated, but it was not a personal triumph, he felt. She was going with him to revenge herself on Sam, and the result might be a physical conflict between Sam and himself.

"Say, hadn't we better bring him along, after all? Sam's a good feller," he suggested uneasily.

Millie's black eyes snapped.

"Mr. McGinness, people with wives better stick around 'em — that's my idea," she replied. "I s'pose he'd leave that poor little soul sit by herself till the night show, while he was gaddin' around. But you two are welcome to go bathin' — I ought to git the Coney Island car an' go over to the hotel, anyway."

The Man Frog protested, and said respectfully that *he* was a bachelor.

"I hadn't saw Sammy since Toledo in nought seven, an' they was layin' off that week, so I never lamped her till to-day," he explained. "She's a clever performer; but I don't like those sharp-chinned blondes — though that's nothin' against her personally."

"I got no interest in 'em or their act," said Millie loftily.

The Man Frog proffered her lavish entertainment. He had her picture taken at a developed-in-twenty-minutes shop. He bought ice-cream, and in another "garden" they had claret lemonades, Millie declining stronger waters.

"Let's go up to Staunch's an' eat," he said, when they had strolled to Coney Island. "I got to be making up at seven-thirty."

"Will you let me pay my own check?"

"No, I won't," said the Man Frog, amused. "Where do you get that at?"

They argued it.

"I wouldn't have no manhood left," he said sturdily.

But Millie declared she would buy her share of the meal or eat alone. He would not weaken, nor would she, so they parted amiably.

"Where'd you go?" inquired Sam, later, and his sullen visage made his friend discreetly vague.

"She canned the ideer of bathin', so we just monkeyed around on the board walk, an' she went over where she rooms. Nice girl."

"What'd she say about me?"

"Not a word."

"Didn't even mention me?"

"Sammy, I got no call to be drug into arguments, an' I won't be," said the Man Frog.

"But ain't you got any notion about what she got sore at me for?"

The Man Frog remained evasive. Privately, he disapproved of Sam's attitude. There might be persons of moral laxity in vaudeville, but he believed, with Millie, that Mr. Loring should give his whole attention to Mrs. Loring.

"Mis' Loring's got a swell little bit in her saxophone solo," he remarked, hoping to remind Sam of his marital obligations.

"Ain't bad. It's the biggest double-bass saxophone in the world. She had it made special," said Sam. "I wonder if she's over here yet? I forgot to ask her about a little matter."

"She's prob'ly on the way, an' mighty lonesome, too."

"Well, that's her funeral, if she is," said Sam, to the other's reproachful look.

"Be a man, Sam! That ain't no way to talk, an' you know it!"

"She's nothin' to me, 'cept in the act," said Sam; and the Man Frog, revolted, withdrew.

Sam lurked near the stage-door, and each time it opened he started forward. Mrs. Loring entered, and he spoke indifferently to her.

"What are you waiting for?" she asked. Sam mumbled. Mrs. Loring laughed, and Millie walked in.

"Miss Laverne, will you spare me just a minute?"

Sam confronted her. Beyond him, Mrs. Loring smiled to herself, and when Millie saw that smile kindness froze in her bosom. She straightened, the squaring of her shoulders permitting her to stare from a superior height at both of them.

"No, I won't! An' if I'm bothered again I'll kick to Mr. Jones," she said, marching by him.

"If I could find the knocker who's been pannin' me to her I'd belt his bean off," said Sam furiously. "Did you see that, Tessie?"

Mrs. Loring's smile increased.

"You're out of luck," said she.

"I guess I am," sighed Sam.

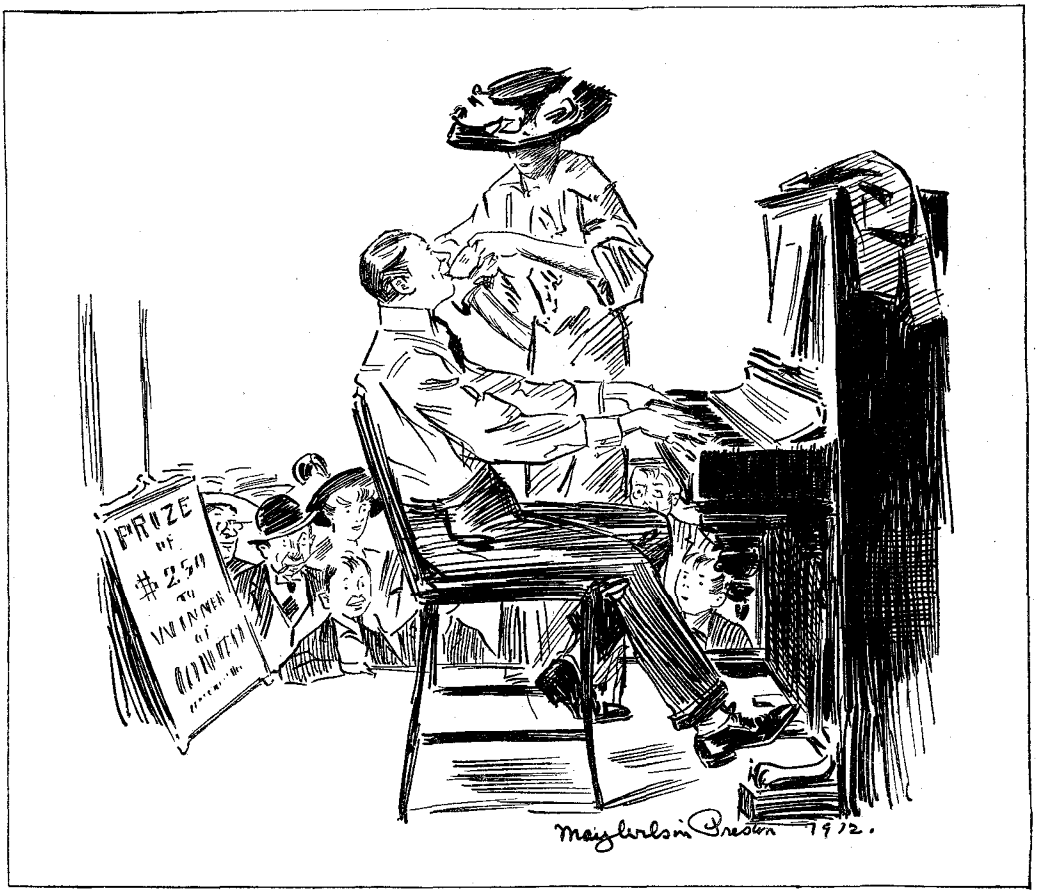
Rain makes a sea-shore resort a melancholy spot, and a steady drizzle fell most of the week. Disconsolate people who came to watch the show soon went home to get warm. Small audiences are an aggravation, and the spirits of the performers proved it.

Because Sam Loring was still endeavoring to obtain speech with her, Millie rushed in and out of the theater, remaining in her dressing-room instead of becoming friendly with the other performers.

"What do you mope in your room for?" the Man Frog asked her.

"They ain't any one on this bill I care about," she answered. "Some weeks everybody'll be a cut-up an' it's fine, an' then again it ain't. But life's like that. Don't you think so?"

"More feathers than chickens," said he. "Did you hear about Sam an' McKittrick the



"SHE GAVE SAM CLAM BROTH, WHICH HE DETESTED BUT DRANK WITH SMILING EYES. 'YOU DO LIKE ME, DON'T YOU, GIRLIE? THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO KNOW'!"

leader hookin' up? Sam said Mac was purposely keepin' two beats behind on his trombone solo, an' Mac said prove it, an' Sam said he didn't have to prove a plain fact. Mac made a pass at him, an' Sam landed. Mac's got a terrible lamp on him to-day." It's queer, but Sam ain't took that woman home one single night this week. I don't like that."

"He's selfish an' neglectful," said Millie.

"I guess they've had a fuss. Nobody stays married very long in this business. You didn't ever marry?"

"An' I never will! You're better alone."

"I dunno," he said slowly. "Why do you keep jumpin' so? Don't you feel good?"

"Oh, I'm nervous!" she cried. "To-day on the wire a woman down front kep' a-starin' up, an' it got me where I near fell off. The public don't realize we got any nerves. They think it's only them. I was all right till I opened here Monday, an' now I hate to go to work! I'm playin' over in Coney Island next week, an' if it rains I'll break my contract. I — I just feel awful."

"It won't rain — an' Sam won't be round, neither. They're layin' off next week, 'cause her mother's sick or sumpin'."

"I ain't even noticed him," she said pensively. But she thought, "If I *did*, he didn't know it."

"Say, after meetin' like this, I hope we're goin' to keep on bein' friends?"

"Oh, sure," said Millie; but the Man Frog sighed at her tone.

"I'm comin' down to ketch your act some evenin' next week, an' we could go git a fried-crab lunch. Will you go? But I'll do the check-payin'."

"I don't b'lieve I'll be goin' out much next week."

The Man Frog said, with obvious spite:

"If I was a fat-faced, hulkin' pianner-player, I s'pose it'd be different? Don't you think I ain't saw you noticin' him, an' plenty, too!"

"Mr. McGinness, that'll be about all from you, an' I scorn your insinuations," she said angrily.

"I see where I git off at!" he exclaimed, as she sailed haughtily past.

"Men!" hissed Millie, in her dressing-room. "I hate 'em all. An' I hate that Sam the most!"

At eleven-thirty of a sultry night the following week Millie walked swiftly along Surf Avenue in Coney Island. She had turned several extra and tiring flips at the night show, and dressed in a room with a garrulous "sister team" from whom she escaped with relief. So she was ready for home and bed. She stopped at a corner to wait for a street-car, and was attracted by a sign stretched across the open lobby of a typical Coney Island "hall":

THE PIANO MARATHON
For a $250 Prize
Admission 25 Cents
The Great Endurance Contest Now Going On

She went nearer and listened. Then she looked for the car. No sign of one. She advanced into the lobby.

"One?" said the ticket-seller indifferently.

Millie put down a quarter and entered. On a platform were four pianos, and before each sat a man, playing steadily. There were no seats, so she pushed through the crowd, discovering that the "Marathon" had begun at noon, and that two of the players had been in a previous contest.

"That big fellow on the other end won't last. He's playing too hard. These two loaf more and keep their strength," remarked an expert. Then he yelled:

"Look! Told you he was all in."

The man at the fourth piano had fallen limply on the keyboard. It was five minutes before he struggled up, retorting to the crowd's ironical laughter:

"Shoveling's easier."

"You see, they've got little camps fixed up, and their friends feed 'em," a woman explained to Millie, who, sickened by the almost edible air, moved determinedly forward, intending to observe each exhibit and leave. None of the three contestants appeared aware that their number was decreased. In the racket they created it was difficult to distinguish tunes; but a long-nosed youth, in funereal time, repeated "Turkey in the Straw." Another listlessly beat out bits of popular airs. His father, a whiskered, sheep-faced man, sustained him with nourishing liquid food, frequently administered.

"I don't give him any alcohol; I'm against it," he said defensively to Millie. "Playing since noon to-day, and look at him — jolly as a grig."

"I think these contests are cruel, and they're enough to kill a man," said she, whereat he retorted that you couldn't pick two hundred and fifty dollars up in the street.

"And I train my Lew for 'em. He won the last. Now you take that big husky on the end, and it is wrong. He might as well quit, 'cause he lacks stamina. My Lew don't. What's the matter? Too hot in here?"

Millie was staring at the "husky."

"No — that is, yes. Good evenin'," she said uncertainly.

Arrived where she faced the wide back of the third player, she stopped. Why was Sam Loring there? Then she remembered that his act was "resting." But he had no "camp." A box of cigarettes by his blue serge coat on top of the piano was the only visible refreshment. He had drawn the largest audience, for whom he was playing, with accuracy and feeling, straight through the second act of "Tristan und Isolde." He played "by ear," and his technique was faulty; but, even amid the ludicrous sounds produced by the mingling of three pianos, his music won appreciation.

"This guy sure kin rattle the horse-teeth," said a facetious spectator.

"He's got a horrid thick red neck," shrilled a girl; and Millie flamed upon the critic, who muttered:

"Well, he has!"

"What's he playin' now?"

Around her they speculated; and suddenly Millie knew, and she flushed, making for the door, then as hurriedly returned. She elbowed the facetious man and the shrill-voiced girl away, and stood there, looking at Sam — at his violet silk shirt, and the violet silk socks that showed above his patent-leather shoes. She had no eye for subtle shadings, and thought the shirt beautiful, especially with his blond hair and ruddy coloring. He knew how to dress! As she stared, his shoulders sagged and he played more slowly, twisting himself wearily. She saw that he was pale, that it was only his sunburned neck that was ruddy to-night. Had he eaten? He must have, for he had been playing continuously for twelve hours. It was now midnight. The whiskered man was carefully stoking his Lew, and a bevy of solicitous trainers served the long-nosed youth. Sam had no one. While she pondered, Sam rallied brilliantly, rattling into "Evening Star."

"He's raggin' it. I think them classicals are grand, ragged," said the shrill girl happily.

Wedged among sweating rows, with eager newcomers in restless movement behind her, Millie watched and listened. Unexpectedly he turned his head and saw her, and red surged over his paleness.

"*You!* Come up here!" he said loudly.

"Oh, keep on — you're stopping!" she cried. His hands were almost still; but at her warning he recommenced, performing with one hand while he called:

"Come up here — please?"

There were snickers as she put a reluctant foot on the platform. The shrill girl looked knowing, the facetious man summoned a friend from the rear to see the tall woman in blue silk who was talking with the pianist.

"There ain't a chair or anything else here," Sam complained. "I staked a waiter from across the street to bring me stuff — gave him two bucks — and he's never been near since, because they're all pullin' for Whiskers' kid to win. How you been?"

"You ain't had anything to eat since noon?"

"No, I ain't. How'd you happen in here? Did you know I was in it? Don't mind that mob down there lookin' — they're just a bunch of yaps."

Millie minded the attentions of the audience greatly, but she tried not to. It was not like being safe on a real stage, with the protecting "foots" between her and the people. She answered his questions vaguely, thinking more of his condition.

"You're awful white!" she said suddenly, "an' — an' — you wait!"

"Where you goin'? You can't go round Coney Island at twelve o'clock alone — I ain't that hungry, an'——"

"Play as easy as you kin, Sam, an' I *will* go! — but I'll be back."

She rushed imperiously through the hall — let them look and laugh if they liked! It was half an hour before she reappeared, a white-coated waiter and a boy following. They were laden with tin buckets and parcels, a little table, and a chair. Millie carried an alcohol lamp and a bottle of fuel for it. The waiter and the boy left, and Millie set up her camp. She gave Sam clam broth, which he detested but drank with smiling eyes; then beaten eggs and something stirred into them that quickened his faculties. The trainers of the long-nosed youth and the father of Lew surveyed her with disfavor.

"You loaf. That's what that old man said to do," she counseled. "And don't talk but a very little."

"You're an ace. An' you do like me, after all, don't you? Don't you, girlie? That's what I want to know."

"Listen here; if there's another word of that, I'm goin'," she said excitedly. "An' I mean it! You git on with your playin'."

At two o'clock he grew drowsy. Millie hurried milk-and-brandy into him, and the audience applauded gaily.

"My wrists are asleep. An' my head's achin', honey. Mebbe I better quit. That ain't the only money in the world. Will I? This air's makin' you pale as a ghost," he said sleepily.

"Sam Loring!"

"Huh?" Roused by her vigorous shake, he opened his sticky eyes.

"That's it. Hold 'em open while I wet 'em with this witch-hazel. It'll only smart a minute — there!"

"I won't quit, then, honey? I'll do just as you say. That stuff smarts."

Millie overlooked the "honey."

"When you've went this far, stick it out," said she. And at that moment the long-nosed youth and his chair tumbled from the platform; so Sam had but one now to beat.

Those who must rise early had long departed, and night-hawks whose forebears had been six-day bicycle race enthusiasts prepared to spend the night comfortably. There was even money offered on both Sam and Lew, and the betting was lively. Smoking was allowed, and in the reek of heat and smoke Sam wilted often, and was as often revived by Millie.

"Oh, I can't stay here any longer. It's nearly four," she thought desperately. "I'm the only woman in the place. Still, if I leave he'll go to sleep, that's certain — the poor fellow."

"My wrists are swellin' a lot," said Sam peevishly. "Is that little guy over there made of iron?"

"He can't stand much more of it. They're givin' him dope, I b'lieve. Say, I'm goin' out an' see if I can't find some wrist-braces. That's what you need. I won't be ten minutes."

He protested against her going; but Millie, sending glances of defiance at the few men left yawning in the hall, issued forth, blinking, and found dawn painting the eastern sky and the spent waves of the ebb-tide breaking gently on the beach.

She felt the need of freshening, and while bathing her hot face at a near-by restaurant she meditated. Hundreds had seen her in charge of Sam Loring's "camp," and these hundreds might, and some undoubtedly would, view her act at Coney Island or elsewhere. If the tale of this night were tattled to the meanest theater employee, the cheapest "supper turn," the "profession" would hear it, act by act — and who had ever before been in a position to hurl a figurative missile at Mlle. Laverne of the circus and of vaudeville? She began to sob helplessly. Why, why had she gone in there last night, and why had her reserve fallen at the sight of Sam's pale countenance?

"I ain't a lady — I ain't actin' like one. I'm carryin' on with a married man — an' if I seen any one else doin' it, I wouldn't leave her near me!"

She would go back and with quiet firmness tell him that it was impossible for her to remain there, even if he had to lose the contest. Or she would hire some one to guard him. That was it! Relieved, she found a newsboy, and asked how he would like to earn five dollars. The wrist-braces were fastened before she told Sam of the substitute who would replace her.

"When you leave I'm goin'," said Sam.

"Drink this nice hot coffee," she pleaded. "An' do be sensible."

"I don't want coffee."

She soothed him, frightened at his manner.

"Millie?"

"Yes?"

"I'd give up a lot of two-fifties just to sit down where it's quiet an' have an hour's talk with you. I was on the level last week, an' I am yet, an' I entered this just to keep my mind busy. Are you *cryin'?*"

"Please, please don't talk that way! Or I'll have to go. I oughtn't to be here at all, an' I d'know what people'll think. An' you make me feel terrible!"

"I don't see why it should," he said sadly. "It don't seem like you'd helped me like this if you didn't think sumpin' about me — all right, I won't. An' I'll drink the coffee."

At seven o'clock a new set of judges climbed into the judicial seats. The son of the whiskered man played, endlessly and unmelodiously, the "Wearing of the Green." With fingers stiffened and sore, Sam rendered the simplest tunes he could remember. At eight, Millie drank some coffee and ate two hot rolls which the boy fetched.

"That other feller's talkin' to himself like a reg'lar nut," the boy reported.

Despite his parent's entreaties, "Lew" sang foolishly to himself, and Sam was encouraged by this evidence of weakness. The boy pulled Millie's sleeve, and she found the whiskered man nodding at her.

"How about splitting the money? They've both had about enough."

"No, indeed! Mr. Loring could play all day easily. He ain't a bit tired," she asserted.

"I'm feelin' stronger," Sam announced, at nine. "Only I can't see. Everything's black and white in front of me. What time is it?"

"Nine. Maybe I ought to have said you'd split, so you could stop."

"Bend over, so the boy can't hear," he requested.

"What is it?" she inquired anxiously.

"I love you!" he whispered.

She retreated to the table and the boy. Certainly this was no place for her. A woman with self-respect could not allow a married man to talk to her like that.

"And if he respected me he wouldn't, unless——"

Was he thinking of divorcing his wife? And, if he was, this was not the time to bestow illegal attention on Mlle. Laverne. But of course he regarded her lightly — a woman who would stay up all night in Coney Island. She jumped up and stood beside him.

"I won't stay another minute! Not one!" she said tremulously. "I'm goin'. Do you hear, Sam Loring? *Oh!* What's that?"

"*I win!*" yelled Sam. "That other guy has quit!"

He struck a few triumphant chords. The scanty audience clapped and cheered. He played a strain of "The Voice that Breathed o'er Eden," ending with "Beautiful Doll."

"We'll go an' eat, an' have that talk," he told her, after collecting his prize money. He stretched his muscles, bent his back, manipulated his swollen wrists. They reached the street.

"I'm goin' this minute," said Millie, trembling. "So goo'-by, Mr. Loring. I ought to gone before."

"No, you don't, girlie! If you hadn't thought a little about me, you'd never stuck here all night. Talk about showin' character! *That* showed it, believe me."

"Sam Loring," said Millie, "you mustn't talk so to me. Remember, you got a wife!"

"*Wife?* An' you got another guess! Was *that* what ailed you?"

"But — Mis' Loring — Loring an' Loring?" she stammered.

"Why, we was divorced three years ago, girlie, an' we just work together 'cause it was too good an act to spoil. McGinness could have told you — but, at that, prob'ly he didn't know it. An' she's married to Pete Smith, of the Head to Head Balancers, dearie. She's over takin' care of Pete's mother this week."

"I thought — I thought —" Millie was weeping openly.

"Let's walk down on the beach," said Sam.

"I was scared everybody in the business'd be talkin' about me," she gulped.

Sam smiled beatifically as he led her out of the hall. Millie held tightly to his arm. On the beach they found a bench, and sat there, looking out upon the ocean, discussing a future of happiness, and of headlining all the bills they played.

CHERRY KEARTON, WHO HUNTS WILD ANIMALS IN THE JUNGLE WITHOUT WEAPONS, AND HIS LION-FIGHTING FOX TERRIER, SIMBA

THE MOVING-PICTURE MACHINE IN THE JUNGLE

BY

WILBUR DANIEL STEELE

TO-DAY a new race of hunters scours the face of nature—men who hunt wild animals, not for their skins, but for their photographs. They have carried their whirring machines across the veldts and brought the lion and rhino back to the "dark room" with them; they have beaten the jungles for a tiger, dangled over cliffs for the eagle, made their way above the "circle" for walrus and bear. Sometimes they have almost died of tropical fever and sometimes fought off the frozen sleep; but Broadway, and Fairfield, Iowa, and Barga, Italy, and Shanghai, China, have had their "movies."

This is romance. And, if that is not enough, it is also science—natural history made interesting.

There is a big Yorkshireman of the name of Cherry Kearton. He stands in the neighborhood of six feet, weighs two hundred and twenty pounds without the aid of any fat, and possesses a long, sweeping mustache and steady, clear-seeing eyes. In his movements he is extremely deliberate. If he were otherwise than deliberate in movement, either he would not be in his present business or he would not be living.

Cherry Kearton and his brother, Richard Kearton, are naturalists of the new schools Twenty years ago they began making picture. of wild animals with a dry-plate camera. They substituted picture-books for dry text-books nobody reads, and have published fifteen of them.

Cherry Kearton did most of the photography while his brother wrote the text. Even in those days he took his camera to the tropics and made flash-lights at water-holes in Africa; but, of course, though he did not know it then, he was only "fooling around," waiting for the kinematograph. When it came, he went to Africa again to "animate" the animals he had photographed before. Among other trips there, he took part in the famous "Buffalo Jones" expedition, "animating" the lassoing of lions, giraffes, and "rhinos" for the Westerners. Later he went to Borneo, made his way into the interior in dug-outs on the rivers and afoot through the almost impenetrable forests, bringing back his film of the orang-outang from the country of the head-hunters. In India his work was catholic enough to include ants and butterflies and tigers and elephants.

Wild Animals Hunted without Weapons

Perhaps no man could be found whose experiences would better illustrate the dangers and vicissitudes, the occasional humor, the never-ending romance, the discouragements and rewards, of the "wild-animal game." Contrary to the general custom of the operators who "work from the ground," Kearton has rarely used dogs, and has insisted, as a rule, that his subjects should not be man-handled in any way. On only one expedition of his own — that with the Masai warriors in East Africa, after lion — have his animals been touched with weapons.

It is quite an exploit to go out on the veldt with a high-power rifle and a small following of dogs and bring down a lion. A lion is an awfully big and fearsome beast in his native wild. But if a man be extraordinarily hard set for amusement, let him strip down to a loin-cloth, take a slender spear in his right hand, go out all alone and find a lion, and then taunt him till he charges; then kill him with the spear. After that, if he were of the Masai, he would be allowed to wear the lion's mane on his head and would be considered an able-bodied hunter.

Carried on a Cot to a Lion Hunt

It was through the kindness and influence of Lord Delamere that Kearton was enabled to go out with a body of these warriors on a lion hunt. The only other white man on the expedition was the Hon. Barclay Cole, brother-in-law of Lord Delamere; and, at the stipulation of the warriors, no firearms whatsoever were carried. Kearton was personally attended by "Mac" (short for Mahomet), the native boy he had trained through many campaigns. Mac's father was killed by the Mad Mullah, and he himself had earned the lion's mane, although still scarcely more than a youth. The rest of the party were made up of the camera porters and four Somali horsemen.

All in all, Kearton made films of five lion-fights on this trip. One of them, at least, is a triumph, not only as a picture, but as an illustration of what a man can do in a tight place.

A runner came into camp, one afternoon, with word that the four Somali horsemen were "holding up" a lion at a certain place on the plain. Kearton was flat on his back with a fever of 104 degrees. It was out of the question for him to attempt the sortie on his own feet, but four of the porters were ordered to take up his cot.

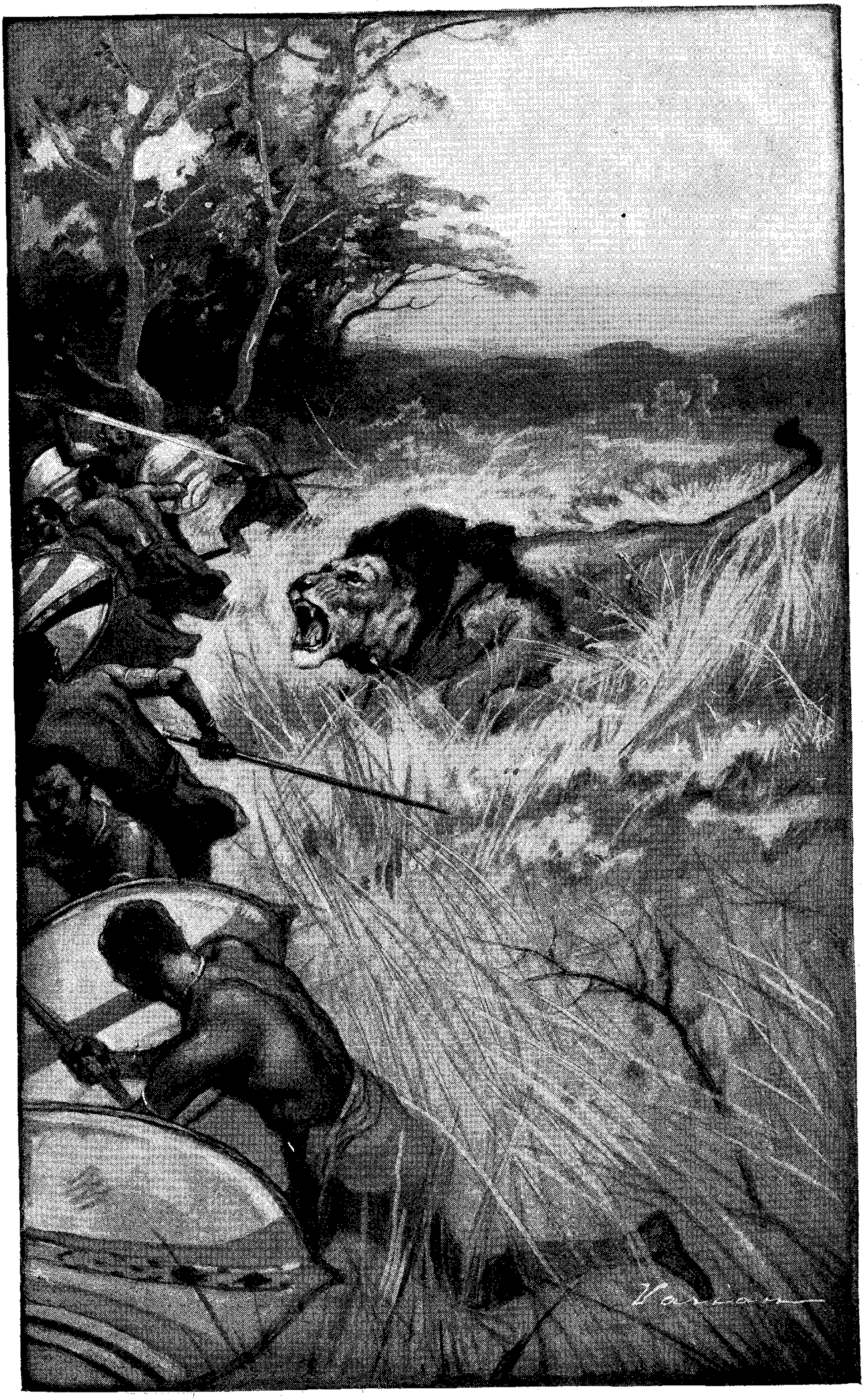
In ten minutes the war party streamed out across the plain: Cole mounted, Kearton jolting and plunging between his four carriers, the camera boys trotting along with the machines, and the Masai in a long thin file, progressing at their own peculiar gait, which is something between a fast walk and a slow run.

Playing Cross-Tag with a Lion

It is an open land, the East African game country, dotted here and there with clumps of brush and solitary thorn trees, and cut up by innumerable *dongas* — somewhat like the arroyos of our own Western plains, except that they are generally choked with bushes. Here on the open veldt they found the Somali riders at their precarious game of "cross-tag." The lion could be seen in occasional glimpses, bounding through the grass and scrub this way and that after the tantalizing players, who passed him from one to another with polished team work, always bringing him back inevitably to his starting-point. In this way they "hold up" a lion in the open for hours at a time.

At a hundred yards the Masai prepared for action, moving to the left and opening out in a wide crescent. Kearton got up from his cot, took the machine and tripod from the boys, and, flanked by a pair of spearmen, moved up toward the Somali and the lion. To the left the Masai, fifteen in number, advanced in the traditional manner, waving their spears. No sound save the tinkling of the leader's rattle came from the dark line. The horsemen began to draw off, their part in the drama finished. Everything was going smoothly, according to program. Having noted these things, the sick man put his eye to the sights and commenced to turn the shutter.

Now, here is a peculiar phenomenon connected with the taking of animated pictures: once the operator has his eye to the sights, he seems to pass into a state of mesmerism, losing all consciousness of the world about him. It is



"HE CAME SLOWLY, BITING AT THE STINGING SPEARS, TEARING UP THE GROUND IN MONSTROUS BIG GASHES. THEN HE CHARGED . . ."

a fact that an operator, following the flight of a bird coming directly over his head, will never know he is falling until his head hits the ground. Even perspective loses its significance.

So now it was only the shouts of the two spearmen that roused Kearton to the fact that the lion had bolted and was bounding away across the plain. This was not at all according to program. Picking up the machine, he gave chase as fast as he could run, the shouts of the pursuing Masai coming to him from the left; his eyes on the little knot of horsemen careening far ahead. His two personal guards had thrown in their lot with the larger body, so that he ran alone, and somewhat to the right.

How It Feels to Photograph a Charging Lion

After half a mile it seemed to Kearton that he could go no farther. The fever had so burned away his strength that he was afraid at every step he would drop. For some unknown reason, the Somali appeared to have slowed down not far ahead. Coming alongside of a little clump of brush, he eased down to a walk, completely "done." The quinine he had been taking, thirty grains a day, had so affected his head that he was almost deaf; he felt, rather than heard, a pounding on the earth to his left, and looking up caught sight of Cole bearing past, close in, at a full gallop.

"Lion in the bush, Kearton!" the rider shouted, gesticulating toward the brush. "*Lion in the bush!*"

"I turned my eyes to the right," says Kearton, "and there he was, sure enough. He was crouching under a scraggly branch, his tail whipping his back, and his mouth three parts open, seven yards away. He was looking at me and growling, and through the leaves I could see his huge front paws dragging back and tearing up the earth.

"Well, it was about as tight a place as I ever care to get into. I daren't look away, and, for all I knew, there was nobody within a hundred yards of me. I think I swore — I always do when I get into a corner, although I am not ordinarily a profane man. I know I began to back away slowly, keeping my eye on the chap all the time. The trouble was that I could have no idea what he was going to do. In open-ground fighting, you can always tell that the beast isn't going to charge, so long as he pounces up and down and *whoofs* at you. That's very different from the lion's 'charge,' when he comes along close down on his belly and at about the rate of an express train.

"When I'd come back about eight yards, I put down the machine and began to turn the handle. 'Kearton,' I said, 'either you are going to get him or he is going to get you, and it'll be no use to bolt.' I'm a bit of a fatalist, you know. It's a queer thing, though. I knew I wasn't turning fast enough, and I kept telling myself so, over and over; but, for the life of me, I couldn't make my hand go faster. I've found it's always so in a tight place. I can see it when the pictures are run through afterwards.

"I kept watching him across the sights for what seemed a terrible stretch of time. At last, from a little corner of my eye I saw a line of black sweeping up. It was the Masai. Of a sudden, the lion snarled and charged out of the bush. Two of the warriors had thrown their spears. As another struck, the beast opened up with the full battle-roar of his kind — he'd only been coughing at me. The Masai ran in closer, some of them throwing more spears, all jeering and taunting, trying to get him further into the open.

"He came slowly at first, biting at the stinging spears, tearing up the ground in monstrous big gashes, and roaring the roar that strikes one in the chest and vibrates out of the back. Then he charged, right into the thick of them. I have it on the film, but it is silent there and one can gain no idea at all of the awful tumult — the monstrous pandemonium of roaring, growling, yelling, and screaming.

"He was dead in ten seconds, driven through and through with the Masai spears, but not before he had bowled over and wounded three of the warriors. I have never seen the like of that sight in my life. It will give some idea of the fierceness with which they throw them when I say that one of the spears went clear through the lion and through the thick of a man's arm lying beneath."

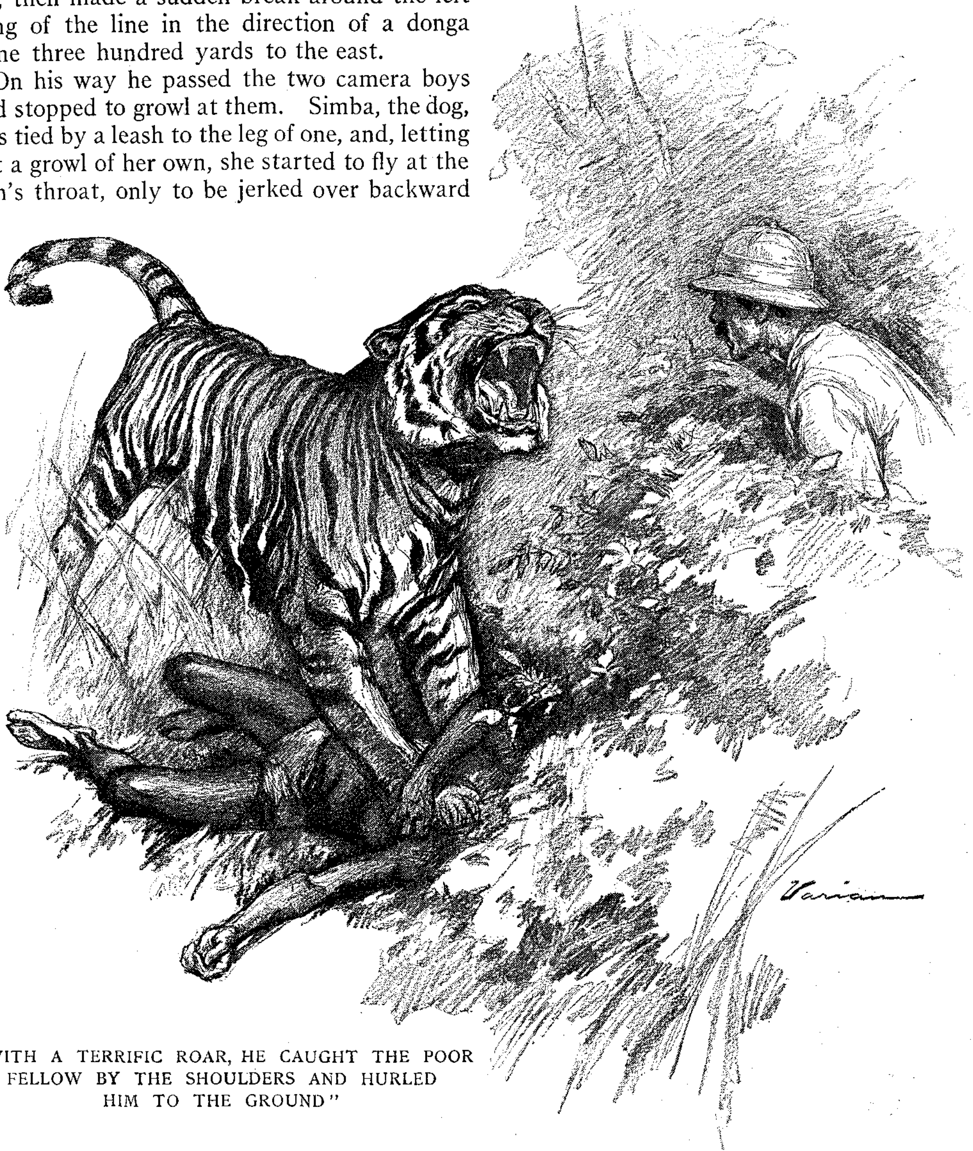
After the fight Kearton collapsed. He knew nothing until he came to life again in camp. But his camera boys carried back in the little dark chamber one of the finest lion pictures ever traced upon a film.

Simba, a Mongrel Dog Who Made a Specialty of Lions

In one lion fight Simba, the little fox terrier, played a conspicuous part. This dog was originally picked up in the London Dogs' Home for a few shillings. The Masai, in time, offered Kearton a hundred dollars in bullocks for her, though with them the dog is "unclean" and not to be touched unless necessity require. Kearton says he has never seen any other dog who would attack a lion single-handed; but Simba did it cheerfully and on every possible occasion.

Simba's great day was once when the party picked up a pair of lions under a thorn tree two hundred yards to the southeast of a kraal, where they had been doing considerable damage. Deploying in the usual manner, the Masai moved upon them, and when within fifteen yards the lioness bolted. The lion stood his ground only a moment more before the advancing skirmishers, then made a sudden break around the left wing of the line in the direction of a donga some three hundred yards to the east.

On his way he passed the two camera boys and stopped to growl at them. Simba, the dog, was tied by a leash to the leg of one, and, letting out a growl of her own, she started to fly at the lion's throat, only to be jerked over backward by the leash. Disgusted, she turned and bit the offending leg, and the owner of the leg gave her her freedom as soon as it was humanly possible.



"WITH A TERRIFIC ROAR, HE CAUGHT THE POOR FELLOW BY THE SHOULDERS AND HURLED HIM TO THE GROUND"

I will let Kearton tell the rest of the story:

"As soon as she was loosed, Simba put her nose in the air, sniffed this way and that way, and then, with an excited yelp, flew straight down into the donga. The next moment a horrible roar came out of the bush. Everybody bolted back fifteen yards or so — it was so utterly unexpected. The boys had thrown stones into the donga, and we supposed the lion must be a mile away by that time. Now he broke cover for an instant, bounding through an open space in the gully; and the startled men let drive their spears, two of them taking effect. I started along the edge at a dead run, bringing up at another clearing to set my machine, and discovered I was all alone, the rest of the party having broken in the opposite direction.

"'Kearton,' said I to myself, '*this is no place* for you. If that lion comes out here he'll get you, sure as fate.'

"So I made a dash for it across the donga, and about thirty yards down the other side I met the Masai. They were leaning over, gesturing wildly toward something below. I asked Mac, my boy, what was up.

"'The lion's got one of the men,' he said. I looked down through the sparse shrubbery, and there, sure enough, I could see the bare legs of a man stretched out on the floor of the depression, and through another rift a glimpse of the lion's hide.

"Well, I'll not say that didn't upset me. I liked those black chaps, and there was something bad about losing little Simba, too. One of the men beside me began moaning and trembling, a form of hysteria that takes hold of these people after a big fight. It was something awful to hear just then.

"Hardly had he started his whining, however, when the black legs in the donga exhibited abrupt signs of life, and the following instant their owner came out of the place like greased lightning.

"It seems that he had been trying to get hold of the black tuft at the end of the lion's tail. Among the Masai, the man who first touches that tuft of hair is the rightful owner of the animal's skin. The lion was lying there dead under the brush, and the warrior had a clear field — except for the little white fox terrier. Simba had hold of that black tuft, and was willing to defend her rights in the matter.

"The Masai went down and dragged the carcass out and held their ceremonial dance around it. Then the chief retired to deliberate. Here was a most extraordinary and difficult case; but in the end he awarded the pelt to little Simba."

Of course, some of Kearton's most memorable adventures have had to do with "films" he failed to get. There was the fight with the rhino, which would have made a splendid picture if it could have been taken from a captive balloon.

On this occasion Kearton was accompanied by Mr. James Clark, late of the Natural History Museum, New York, one camera porter, and two spearmen. Out on the veldt the day before, Clark had suddenly discovered himself in the immediate vicinity of fourteen lions. With great discretion, he had withdrawn and returned to camp.

It was in pursuit of these fourteen lions that the party of this day were out. They had been swinging along for some time, with a donga to the left of them, when, for some unknown reason, the thought of rhino came into Kearton's head.

"What about rhino?" he threw out, as a perfectly casual remark.

"Needn't worry about *them*," Clark assured him. "I've been around here quite a while, and I haven't seen a sign of them."

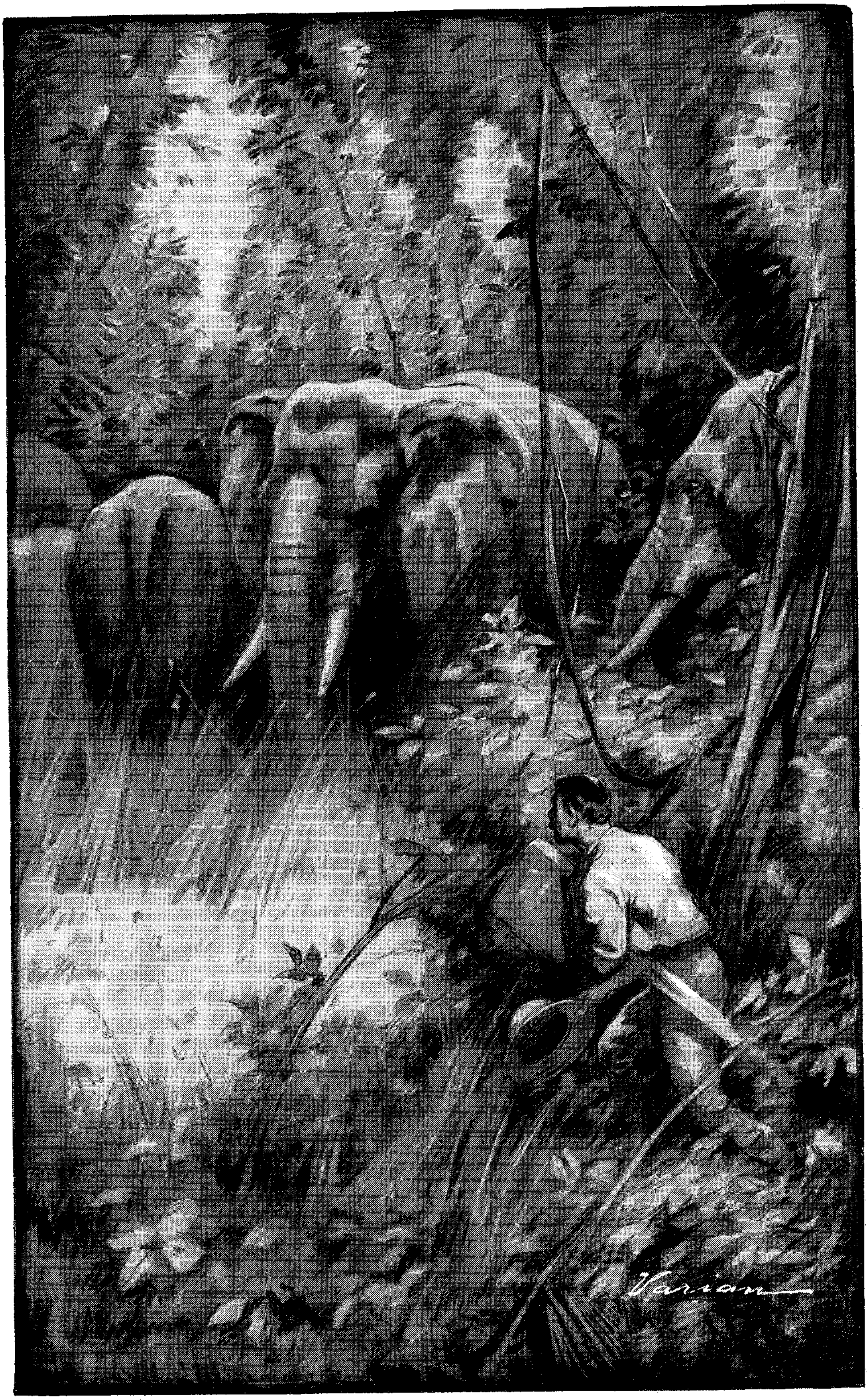
A Rhino Film Kearton Didn't Get

The air was coming from ahead and to the right, so that anything that happened to be in the donga would not get their wind until the party had passed by some twenty yards or more. It is probable that when Kearton made his remark he was directly abreast of, and some ten or fifteen yards away from, two rhinos, resting in the bush. It is certain that a few seconds later his ears were smitten by a wild yell, and he raised his eyes just in time to catch a vague glimpse of his camera boy disappearing in a southerly direction. Out on the plain to the right stood a solitary tree, too big to climb. The two spearmen were making for this at the top of their speed; so was Clark, who was shouting over his shoulder at Kearton.

"The first thing that came into my head," Kearton relates, "was that bunch of lions. I took just one look behind me, and then I started out after Clark and the spearmen. All I could see in that glance was a big tower of dust bearing down at a tremendous rate, and two wicked-looking horned snouts tossing in the middle of it, and all I could hear was a puffing like a dozen steam engines, but that was enough.

"Well, when I got along toward the tree I saw the two blacks standing, one behind and one beside it, with their spears raised, and Clark taking aim. I got there somehow, whirled about, and dropped on one knee beside him. It's hard to remember what happened in the next second or so. I recall hearing Clark shout, 'Fire, Kearton!' and something about his gun being jammed — and there were those animals coming down on us at the rate of an express train and not above nine yards away! I had covered my own, but at Clark's shout I had to shift to the other, the one on the left, all of which took time. I looked at the horn first, but that was no use. So I pulled down to the left shoulder and let go. I found out afterwards that the bullet entered the shoulder and came out near the backbone.

"The rhino's charge carried him to within two yards of my knee, where he fell. There was such a muss of dust kicked up that I couldn't see a thing; but I knew there was another of the beasts to be dealt with, and I didn't want to do it at such close quarters kneeling down. I yelled to Clark, as the one I had pulled down was up with his last strength and charging him, and then I doubled around behind the tree. And right there I had my first and last personal meeting with a rhinoceros. It appears he had had enough of it and bolted, too. As I veered around the trunk, I met him full on with my shoulder, and went sprawling, very scared. But he was through. With a grunt, he galloped off across the plain in a cloud of dust. All this time I had seen nothing of the spearmen; but in the mêlée they had thrown their spears, which I found afterwards, bent and broken."



"HE WAS SO CLOSE TO THE GREAT BEASTS THAT HE WAS AFRAID TO TURN THE HANDLE OF HIS MACHINE"

Kearton's Fear of the Nimble Elephant

Kearton failed to get wild elephants in Africa for the seemingly paradoxical reason that he got too close to them.

"I will cheerfully admit," says Kearton, "that I am afraid of elephants. Lions and tigers and rhino it is reasonable to go after—but I'm afraid of elephants. They're too mighty quick."

It was in a country thickly studded with brakes of bamboo that he found elephants. These clumps were rather small, but so arranged that it was impossible to see more than fifteen or twenty yards in any direction, and it was only through hearing the great beasts at their feeding, pulling up the shoots with a tearing of roots, and blowing and rumbling, that he was able to locate them at all.

Leaving his three trackers behind, he stalked the invisible animals with all the care and patience of his kind. And, when he did at last creep around the corner of a clump and sight them, he was so close to the great beasts — fifteen yards — that he was afraid to turn the handle of his machine. He knew that he would never have a chance in the world, once their quick ears caught the whirring of the shutter.

So he had to retrace his difficult path, find his trackers, and order them to make a wide circuit, come up on the elephants from the other quarter, and make a demonstration. Then he returned to his post to catch them when they charged away. At the first hostile sound, however, the trumpeting pachyderms left so abruptly that they seemed actually to vanish into the air. It turned out afterward that they had chased two of the men up a tree and held them there all night.

Kearton did get elephants in India, however — two of them at a water-hole. But his chief object in that land was tiger. He went into the jungle for twenty days with a game ranger, on the back of an elephant which the Maharaja of Mysore had put at his disposal; but never a tiger did he see.

It is closer work in the Indian jungle than in the thorn-dotted veldts of East Africa. For days at a time the hunter moves on through the choking, steaming vegetation, and it is a rare vista that runs more than a dozen yards before it is stopped by an impenetrable wall of jungle. It is a bad place for the moving-picture man, the jungle, for, with all its myriad wild folk, they are to be seen only in occasional vague flashes across the green.

An Encounter with an Angry Tiger

After twenty days in the jungle, despairing of his tiger, Kearton turned back toward the plowed lands. And there, half a mile from a village, he found it. It was at a point where a spur of the jungle came down into the open country — a sort of "V-shaped" cape of forest running out toward the village. A short distance up this cape an open space led across it, and here it was that the tracks of the big cat were found, leading out of a leafy tunnel from the village side and into a continuation of the tunnel which went on toward the main jungle. Kearton crawled a short distance along the gloomy path with a Colt's automatic leveled before him. The half-eaten carcass of a bullock lay on the shadowed floor of the passage, and all along the path the scars showed where it had been dragged over the earth. Mingled with them were the "pugs" of the tiger, going backward.

Kearton had seen enough. As soon as possible, he had his beaters away to work across the big end of the cape, so as to cut off the tiger from the jungle mainland. Then he personally superintended the construction of a light screen of leaves and branches near the mouth of the tunnel, facing the path across the open space. Behind this he took up his position with his machine, two of his beaters and the game ranger kneeling some distance in the rear.

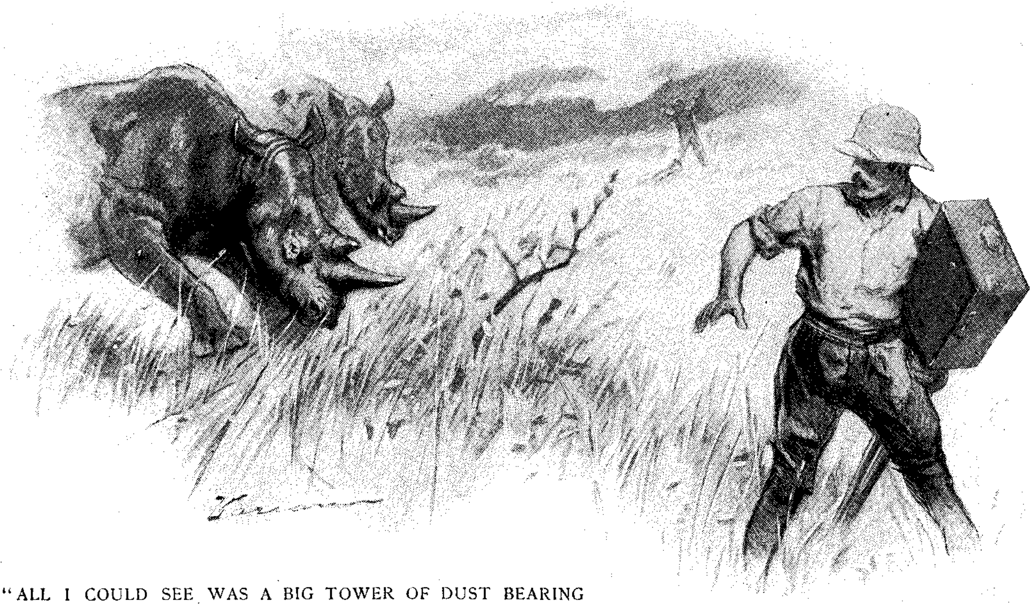
Then came a tense and prolonged wait for something to happen. As the time passed by, there began to grow the uncertainty as to whether the tiger was there at all — whether he had not somehow managed to slip through the lines and gain the depths of the jungle.

The question was answered by the tiger. He came across the open in a sinuous, looping flash, coughing terribly at the hostile whirring behind the screen, and vanished in the drift toward the village. A moment later Kearton caught a glimpse of him bounding across the clearing in the other direction, but out of range. He would be back, then.

A Film that Cost a Life

The man behind the screen set himself for another wait, but this time it was not so long. The beaters were moving down. Now the tiger peered out from the leafy curtain, worried by the strange proceedings in his path. In the film which Kearton afterward developed, the huge, curiously patterned face may be seen materializing little by little from the fabric of the green, like a Cheshire cat in the large. Then he bounded across once more, this time growling wickedly.

When he was gone, Kearton stepped out in front of the screen and began measuring the distance at which the tiger had been photographed. The two native beaters were overwhelmed with



"ALL I COULD SEE WAS A BIG TOWER OF DUST BEARING DOWN ON ME, AND TWO WICKED-LOOKING HORNED SNOUTS IN THE MIDDLE OF IT"

surprise and disappointment. They had imagined that a shower of bullets would rain out of the muzzle of the machine when Kearton turned the handle, and they had fully expected the animal to fall, riddled like a sieve. Also, they had come to the conclusion that the big white man with the mustachios was mad. This opinion was concurred in by the game ranger. He was just saying that he wouldn't do that again for a thousand pounds sterling, when a full-throated, nerve-twanging cough came out of the opening in the thicket, seeming to roll and reverberate over the ground like something actually ponderable.

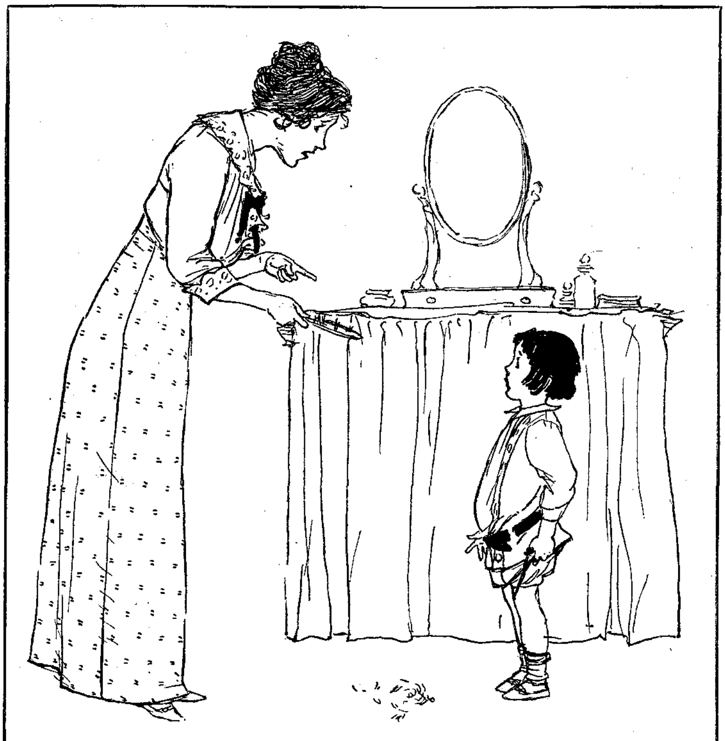
"I looked to my right," says Kearton, "and there was one of my guards going up a tree like lightning. To my left the other was doing the same to another tree. I picked out a third tree. I don't recollect getting up the trunk of it, but later I found the inner sides of my knees scraped raw, so I must have done something quickly.

"Those beaters had nerve, though. When we had come to the ground once more, one of them wanted to go after the beast. He stood and argued with me across the screen, trying to make me understand with his outlandish jabbering and gesticulations. And as he stood there the great striped beast bounded out for the third time, and with a terrific roar caught the poor fellow by the shoulders and hurled him to the ground before my eyes. It was a terrible sight — a sight I shall never forget to my dying day. I stood with my head over the screen, looking full in his face, and that eleven-foot demon stood and glared back at me, his foot on the poor chap's shoulder and his cruel claws driven far into the man's chest, coughing and coughing at me. It is a different sound from that of the lion, but its object is the same — to frighten and stampede the victim. I tell you, I felt foolish and scared, but I knew enough not to flinch so much as the hair of an eyelid. If I had, it would have been the last of Cherry Kearton. After a moment the beast whirled and crashed into the undergrowth."

Kearton worked for four years trying to catch a caterpillar going into the chrysalis state, and at last he succeeded — four years for forty seconds of action. He spent almost as long watching to get a butterfly emerging from the cocoon — and failed.

One of these cocoons beat him in the Red Sea, on his way out to Africa. For three whole days and nights he had watched beside the little bundle. He had arranged that the ship's engines should be stopped at the proper moment, so that there should be no vibration. All was in readiness.

Then, just at dawn one morning, the watcher observed the premonitory stirrings in the tiny object under his electric light. He rushed to the deck, fixed his machine, and hurried below to get the cocoon. And there on the table, in the waning glow of the incandescent bulb, was a butterfly just unfolding its new wings!



"'Just look at that brush!' his mother exclaimed"

BILLY BRAD AND THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT

BY

ELLIS PARKER BUTLER

AUTHOR OF "PIGS IS PIGS," ETC.

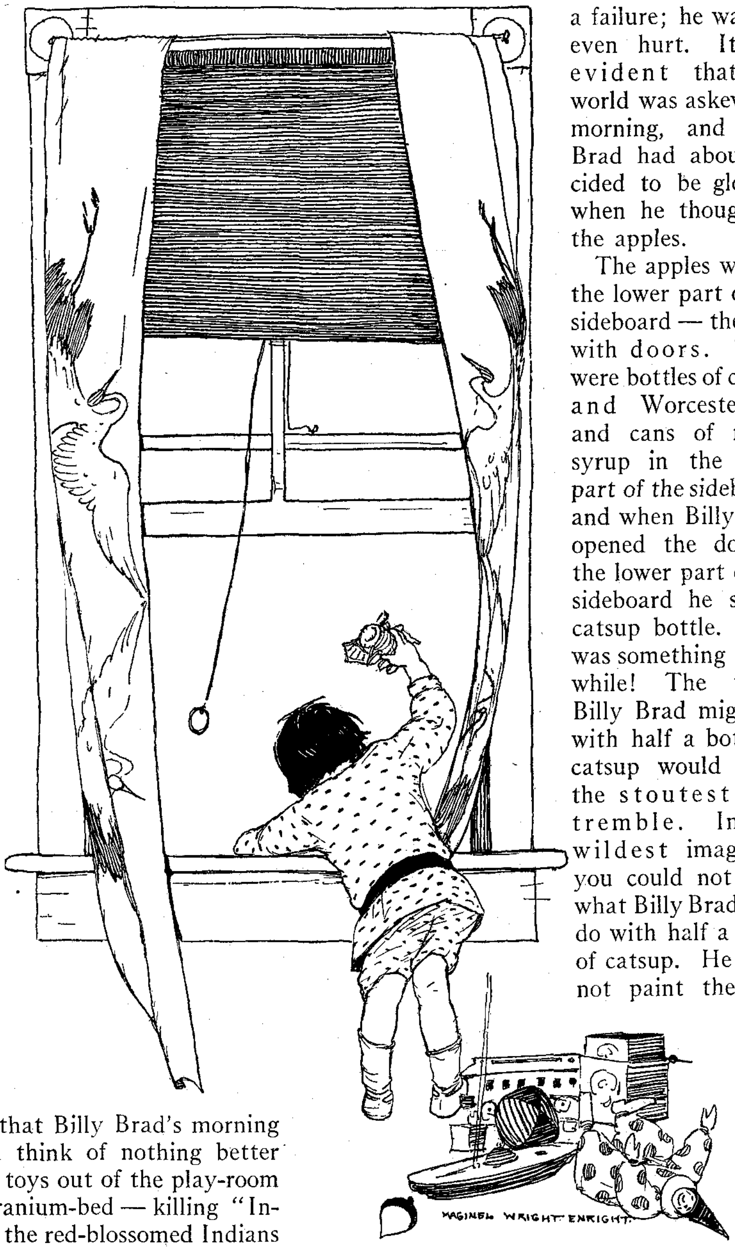
ILLUSTRATIONS BY MAGINEL WRIGHT ENRIGHT

Ellis Parker Butler is known from one end of this country to the other for that masterpiece, "Pigs is Pigs." In this story Mr. Butler has turned his hand to something quite different. He has created Billy Brad, who deserves to become one of the great children of fiction—another Emmy Lou.

"AND you must not take an apple," said Billy Brad's mother warningly. "If you want an apple, come to me and ask me, and if I think you may have one I will pare one for you. You are too young to know whether you need an apple or not. Do you understand? You must not take the apples!"

"Yes, mama," said Billy Brad cheerfully, and that was a bad sign. There was no reason why Billy Brad should be cheerful; for the day, so far, had not been a success — success and mischief being synonymous in Billy Brad's mind. So far, he had been spanked only twice, and this was far below the average and indicated an unsuccessful day. His world seemed barren of opportunities. The day had begun well enough, for he had found a large jar of cold cream on his mother's toilet-table, and had oiled the bedroom floor with it, giving the floor a better gloss than even Katy had ever been able to give it. For this he had been mildly spanked. Then he had found the shears, and stood on tiptoe, searching the top of Mrs. Bradley's toilet-table for a certain long switch of hair that at times reposed there — for at that moment Billy Brad was a barber, and wanted to "cut it." There was no switch visible, so he "cut" the hair of Mrs. Bradley's best silver-backed hair-brush. The crisp bristles snipped deliciously, but the affair was a tactical error.

"Just look at that brush!" his mother had exclaimed. "It is not good for a thing in this world, now, but to spank you with. I'll keep it to spank you with, Billy Brad. Come here to me!"



"He could think of nothing better than to throw all his toys out of the window"

For an hour after that Billy Brad's morning was dull. He could think of nothing better than to throw all his toys out of the play-room window into the geranium-bed — killing "Inyuns"; but when all the red-blossomed Indians had been crushed to earth, this was no fun, and he came downstairs. His first impulse was to come downstairs as a "big old dog"— on his hands and knees; but he remembered that the last big old dog he had been had fallen bumpety-bump down the entire long flight, so he came down as a big old snake.

A big old snake comes downstairs head first, on its belly, clinging with its toes, and hissing virulently. Four or five steps from the bottom, it loses its hold and bumps down. In this it resembles the big old dog.

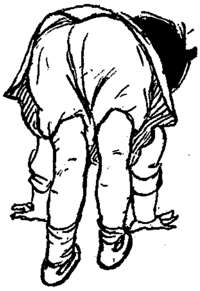
Billy Brad picked himself up and seated himself on the bottom step. The descent had been a failure; he was not even hurt. It was evident that the world was askew this morning, and Billy Brad had about decided to be gloomy, when he thought of the apples.

The apples were in the lower part of the sideboard — the part with doors. There were bottles of catsup and Worcestershire and cans of maple syrup in the lower part of the sideboard, and when Billy Brad opened the door of the lower part of the sideboard he saw a catsup bottle. Here was something worth while! The things Billy Brad might do with half a bottle of catsup would make the stoutest heart tremble. In your wildest imaginings you could not guess what Billy Brad could do with half a bottle of catsup. He would not paint the wallpaper with it, for that is something you could imagine him doing. Billy Brad always did the thing no one else could possibly have thought of doing. But just as he reached for the catsup bottle Mrs. Bradley entered from the kitchen.

"Billy Brad!" she said sharply. "Don't you touch those apples."

"No, mama," he said sweetly, as she closed the door of the sideboard.

"Now, mind!" said his mother. "Will you promise me not to take an apple?"



"Yes, mama," said Billy Brad. "I won't take a napple, but — but — but maybe a big old slickery snake might take a napple."

Mrs. Bradley looked at him suspiciously. She knew that Billy Brad could, with ease, transform himself into beast or bird or reptile. When he crept on his hands and knees and said, "Wow, wow!" he was a big old dog; when he walked on hands and feet, with his plump little haunches higher than his head, and said, "Oof, oof!" he was a big old bear; and when he lay flat on his belly, and wiggled and hissed, drawing himself along by his elbows and finger-nails, he was a big old slickery snake. A slickery snake might do, with a clear conscience, things Billy Brad had promised not to do.

"Billy Brad," said his mother, "you must promise that no big old slickery snake, nor any other animal, or bird, or anything else, will touch the apples. Will you promise?"

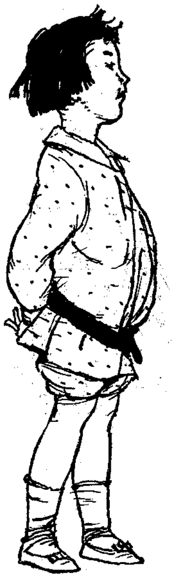
"Yes, mama," said Billy Brad cheerfully. "And — and — and if a big old slickery snake comes to take one of my mama's apples, I'll take a big swo-word and — and — and cut its head off, I will!"

"Never mind about that!" said Mrs. Bradley. "You have promised. My little boy would not tell a fib. I can trust him. Can't I?"

"Yes, mama," said Billy Brad willingly, for he had no intention of taking an apple. He desired a catsup bottle. He hungered for a catsup bottle. What he would do with it when he got it did not bother him at all. A catsup bottle half full of catsup is a useful thing for a boy to have on hand in case of emergencies. There is no telling when it may come in handiest, and the rational thing to do, when there is a catsup bottle to be had, is to have it.

Mrs. Bradley went into the kitchen, her mind at rest as to the apples, for Billy Brad was a truthful boy. If he said he would not take an apple she felt she could depend on him not to take one, for he had been taught the awfulness of a lie. Mr. Bradley had taught him, with a little rawhide whip that lay on the top shelf of the hall closet. Billy Brad knew that a lie was the one unforgivable sin.

Billy Brad lingered between the dining-table and the sideboard when his mother had gone into the kitchen. Although nothing had been said about catsup bottles, he had a feeling that he had better wait a while before taking one. He leaned against the dining-table and waited. It was a circular table, of mahogany, with a high, glowing polish, and when Billy Brad leaned against it with his head raised enough to give him a good view of its top, his mouth just reached the rim of the table. He put out his tongue and tasted the table top. There was no taste to it at all; it was neither sweet nor sour nor bitter. He opened his mouth wider and tried to bite the table top, and his sharp little teeth sank into the soft, varnished wood quite pleasantly, and when he looked he saw that his teeth had made a pretty semicircle of white dots. This was interesting. Billy Brad moved slowly around the table, making semicircles of white dots. He felt that the appearance of the table was greatly improved. He made dots quite around the table top.



" 'I got a napple,

On the top of the table was a large, highly embroidered linen table-cover, and in the exact center of the cover stood a tall glass vase of flowers. Billy Brad fingered the edge of the table-cover, and it moved. He grasped one of the pointed scallops and walked slowly around the table. The entire table-cover revolved, and with it the vase in the center turned slowly. As he walked he kept his eyes on the vase, and sang:

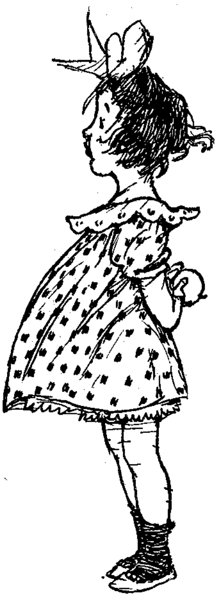
"All aroun' a mubbery-
bush, mubbery-bush,
mubbery-bush;
All aroun' a mubbery-
bush, mubbery-bush,
mubbery-bush."

He walked around the table three times, sing-songing, but the vase did not topple over. It was an unsatisfactory vase, and the fourth time around Billy Brad held out his free hand. By stretching out his free arm he could touch three chairs as he passed them. So he sang:

"All aroun' a mubbery-bush — tag!
Mubbery-bush — tag!
Mubbery-bush — tag!"

On the fifth round, holding his hand extended after touching the second chair, his finger-tips touched the door of the sideboard. It was a loosely hung door, and, when he touched it, it closed and rebounded open again. On the next round he tagged it a little harder, and it opened a full two inches. A delicious odor of apples issued forth, and through the crack Billy Brad could see the catsup bottle. When he reached the door again he deserted the table-cover and opened the sideboard door. He put his hand into the lower part of the sideboard, reaching for the catsup bottle, and the topmost apple of the pile in the dish bumped to the floor and rolled under the table. Billy Brad withdrew his hand quickly, and three more big red apples followed and rolled across the floor. A glimmering of the power of circumstantial evidence to convict the innocent frightened him, and he hippety-hopped guiltily twice, away from the sideboard.

He went into the hall. When apples are rolling is no time to acquire a catsup bottle. The front door was open, and Billy Brad went out upon the porch. At the bottom of the porch steps was a cement walk, and at the corner of the walk was a small hole, no bigger than his thumb, that led into unknown depths under the walk. Billy Brad remembered this hole now, and he remembered that he had a dead caterpillar in the porch hammock, so he got the dead caterpillar and put it in the hole. He now had three dead bugs, a glass marble, and a dead caterpillar in the hole. It was quite a treasure-trove. He looked about for some other thing of great value to put in the hole. He tried to remember where he had seen a certain dried angleworm. He heard the screen door of the next house slam. He brightened at once. It meant that Florence was coming out to play.



an' you ain't!' "

Florence came down her porch steps slowly, with her hands behind her back. She looked at Billy Brad doubtfully, for only last night she had been whipped for letting Billy Brad put burs in her hair. She had gone in proudly, with her yellow curls beautifully "done up" in the back with burs, and instead of meeting with praise she had been whipped. Contact with Billy Brad might mean serious catastrophe. She hesitated at the bottom of her steps.

But Billy Brad did not hesitate. He walked straight across the pansy-bed into Florence's yard, and took his place immediately before her, with his hands behind his back,— because Florence had her hands behind her back,— and looked at her.

"I got some'n an' you ain' got," said Florence teasingly.

"I got a — a big old lion in my house," said Billy Brad. "And — and — and I got it down my cellar. And — and — and I got it in a coal-bim, I have. And — and — and if I want to I can go down in my cellar, and — and I can go in my coal-bim. And — and I can pat my big old lion, I can. And — and he won't bite me, for 'cause I tooked my mama's scissors and I cutted his teef all out."

Florence looked at him doubtfully. To her mind, it was quite within possibility that a boy should have a lion down cellar in his coal-bin. If he had, it was quite useless to compete by mentioning that her mama had a big cake in the kitchen. She decided it would be more tantalizing to stick to things near at hand.

"I got a napple," she said, suddenly flashing it before Billy Brad's eyes, "an' you ain't!"

"That's my napple!" said Billy Brad promptly. "I want my napple."

"It's my napple!" said Florence. "My mama gave me my napple."

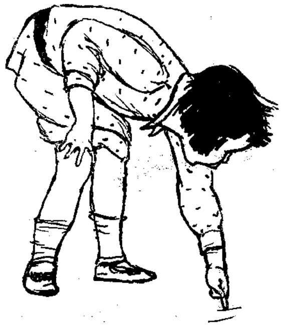
"I want it," said Billy Brad, and he took it. At that age all little boys are robber barons, and no little girls have sex, so he took it as a right. Florence, being robbed, opened her mouth and wept. Billy Brad stood ungallantly and watched her cry, for the cryings of Florence were an interesting mystery to Billy Brad. She was the best cryer on the block, and when she cried Billy Brad could see all the trimmings of the inside of her mouth — the small white teeth, the funny crinkles in the roof of the mouth, and the red tongue all the way back to where it was hitched on. It was an interesting spectacle, and Billy Brad took a step nearer, that he might see better.

"My papa's got gold teef," he said, when he had satisfied himself there was no chance of seeing all the way down Florence's throat. "And you ain't got gold teef."

Florence stopped crying immediately. She had never thought of having gold teeth. It was a new idea. She considered it a moment, and decided that the loss of the apple was the most important incident of the moment.

"I want my napple!" she screamed. It was a shocking display of temper.

"You can't have it," said Billy Brad, and turned away. "I need it."



Five minutes later Billy Brad sat on his porch steps, eating the big red apple, and Florence, virtuously aloof, sat on her own steps, eating another, when Mrs. Bradley, passing through the dining-room, saw the apples on the floor and the sideboard door wide open. She stepped to the front door and looked out. Billy Brad, who had promised not to touch the apples, eating one! As he heard his mother's step he looked up at her — placidly.

"Billy Brad," said his mother sternly, "I am going to tell your father!"

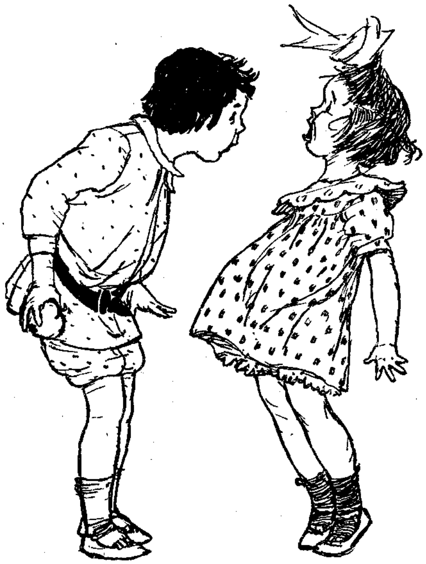
"Are you?" said Billy Brad pleasantly. He did not ask what she was going to tell him. He did not so much as wonder what. So many things happen in the course of a day that it is not worth while trying to think what a father is to be told. Often, when Billy Brad had decided what he was to be whipped for, it had, in the event, proved to be something entirely different — something he had quite forgotten.

"And I shall see that he gives you the good whipping you deserve!" said Mrs. Bradley severely.

Billy Brad dug his sharp teeth into the apple. On the score of the apple his mind was at rest. There, at least, he was guiltless. It was his by right of conquest. He humped his back a little more, as if in mute admission of the truth of the sentiment, "We are all miserable sinners."

He ate the apple to the utmost core, and put the core down the hole with the caterpillar. Not because the core was precious, but because it seemed a logical thing to put an apple core down a hole so evidently sized to receive it.

"Now, Billy Brad," said his father, that evening after dinner, "I want a little serious talk with you, young man! Your mother told you not to take an apple to-day, and you promised not to take one. Do you remember that?"



"The crying of Florence was an interesting mystery to Billy"

"Yes," said Billy Brad; "and — and — and Flowence had a napple, and — and ——"

"Now, never mind about Florence," said Mr. Bradley coldly. "You promised mother not to take an apple; and when a boy promises not to take one, and then does take one, it is a fib, and a fib is a lie. Do you understand?"

"Yes," said Billy Brad. "Papa, fen — fen — fen you open your mouf I can see *all* your gold teef. And — and — and Flowence ain't got *any* gold teef!"

He said it sadly, as if not having gold teeth was the ultimate sorrow. This was, as you can see at once, a complete explanation of the apple episode, and his father should have known it. If Florence had no gold teeth Billy Brad must have been looking into her mouth, and if he had looked into her mouth she must have been crying, and if she had been crying it must have been because Billy Brad took her apple, and that explained where Billy Brad had obtained the apple. But fathers are notoriously dense.

"We'll forget about gold teeth," said Mr. Bradley coldly. "We will talk about apples. Now, Billy Brad, I want you to tell me the whole apple story."

Billy Brad brightened. He loved stories. He loved to hear them, but even more he loved to tell them.

"There was a big old slickery snake," said Billy Brad, "a great big old slickery snake, and — and — and it wuggled like a wum ——"

"Stop there!" said his father. "It did not wiggle like a worm, for there was no snake — no snake at all."

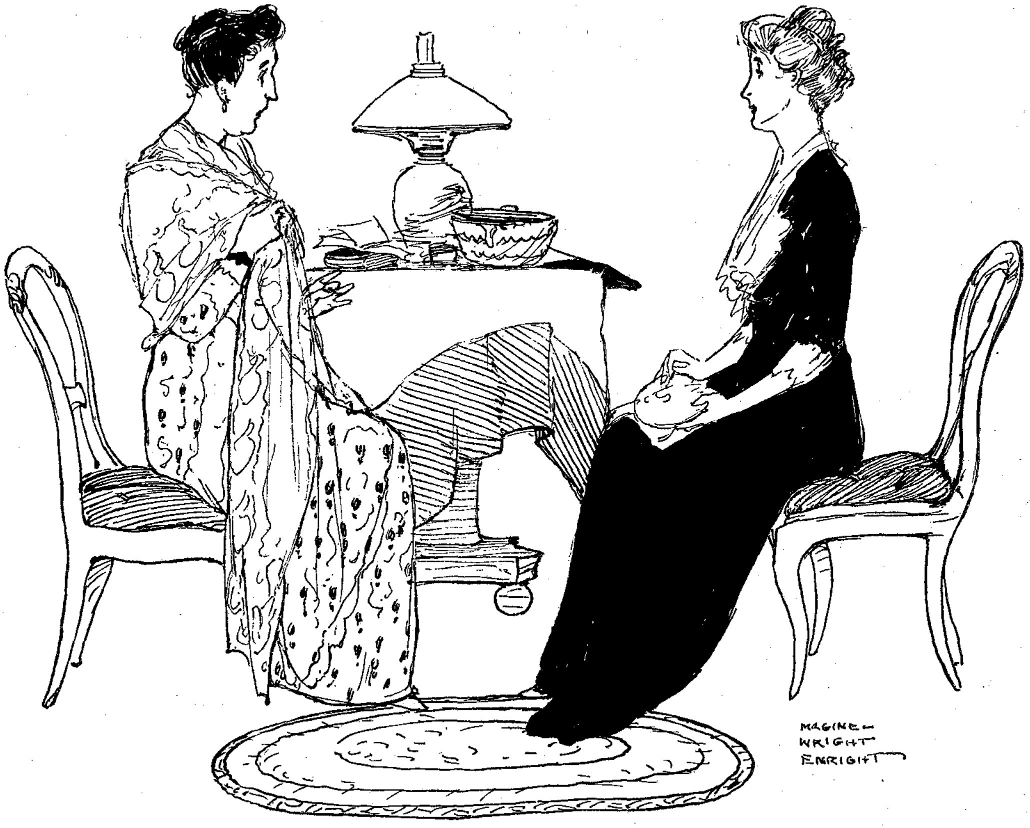
"And — and — and there wasn't no big old slickery snake," said Billy Brad, "and it didn't not wuggle like a wum — What did it wuggle like, papa?"

"It didn't wiggle like anything," said Mr. Bradley sternly. "There was no snake, and you know it. Now, go on with this apple story. Your mother told you not to take an apple ——"

"Yes," said Billy Brad, "and — and — and — Why wasn't there no wuggly old snake, papa?"

"Because," said Mr. Bradley, "you were the snake."

"And I was the old slickery snake," said Billy Brad. "And — and — and I wented into the garden, and — and I wuggled up a noak tree —"



"The unpleasant half hour when the woman next door comes to complain of your child"

"Now, stop!" said Mr. Bradley. "That's nonsense. You didn't go into the garden, and you didn't wiggle up an oak tree, because there is no oak tree in the garden, and if there was it wouldn't have anything to do with apples. Apples don't grow on oak trees. Apples grow on apple trees. Acorns grow on oak trees. And these apples were in the sideboard."

"Were they?" asked Billy Brad, with surprise.

"Of course they were!" said Mrs. Bradley impatiently. "You know they were, Billy Brad."

"Do I?" said Billy Brad, but the information seemed new to him. "And — and — and," he began carefully, "there wasn't no old wuggly snake, and there wasn't no napples on the noak tree, for 'cause napples grow on napple trees. And — and — and —" He hesitated. Nothing in the way of a story seemed to suit his father this evening. He felt he must be careful. "And a big old nangel flewed down," he began briskly.

"No," said his father, shaking his head. "No angel flew down. Not an angel. Not a single, solitary angel. *You* took the apple, Billy Brad!"

"Out from the sideboard in the garden?" asked Billy Brad.

"The sideboard couldn't be in the garden," said Mr. Bradley, "and you know it. Sideboards are never in the garden. Sideboards are in the dining-room. You went into the dining-room, and you took an apple out of the sideboard. No snake, no oak tree, no garden. You took the apple. Now, *why* did you take the apple?"

"For 'cause," said Billy Brad, turning his bright eyes up to his father's face, "for 'cause I was a devil!"

That settled it! A father, even an indulgent father like William Bradley, can not have a son saying such things. He may, or he may not, believe in the black personage mentioned himself, but he can not permit a boy who has stolen an apple, and then fibbed about it, to throw the blame on Satan, still less mention his name in its vulgar form in excuse of his misdoings. He led Billy Brad through the hall to the kitchen, stopping at the hall closet for the rawhide whip. The interview in the kitchen was long. There had to be a long explanation of the reason for the whipping before it took place, and a long wiping of tears and close clasping of a sobbing little boy in a father's arms after it was all over. But

Billy Brad never bore ill will. He kissed William Bradley fervently when it was all over, and took his hand to be led back into the parlor.

Mrs. Bradley was not alone. She was sitting very primly in her chair. And facing her in another chair was Mrs. Wix, her lips set firmly. You know the unpleasant half hour when the woman next door comes to complain of your child, and how unpleasant it is when you know she is right. You know in your heart she is right, and yet you feel that she is a most disagreeable, meddling person. Your back stiffens at once. Mrs. Bradley's back was as stiff as a ramrod.

"More of Billy Brad's naughtiness!" she said.

"That's bad!" said Mr. Bradley, without vigor. He knew one thing. After the painful scene in the kitchen, Billy Brad would receive no more punishment at his hands that evening!

He took Billy Brad on his lap. "What's the young terror been doing now?" he asked.

"Will you tell him, Mrs. Wix?" asked Mrs. Bradley stiffly.

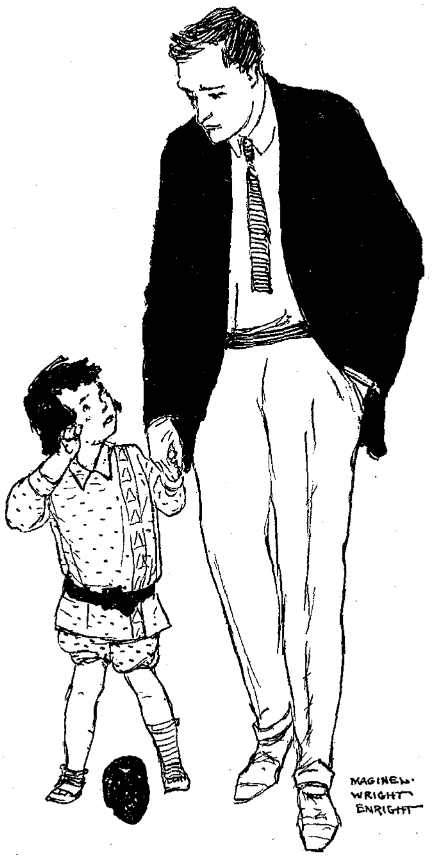
"I prefer you should tell his father," said Mrs. Wix, with the air of a woman who has seen her unpleasant duty and has done it.

"Very well," said Mrs. Bradley. "This morning Mrs. Wix gave Florence an apple and sent her into the front yard. She heard Florence cry, and looked out in time to see Billy Brad deliberately take the apple away from her, and then he stood and made faces at her while she cried!"

"I — I — I saw how many teefs Flowence has got," said Billy Brad. "But Flowence hasn't got any gold teef. My papa's got gold teef."

The information was for the benefit of Mrs. Wix, who did not seem much impressed by it, after all.

"Took her apple, did he?" said Mr. Bradley. "Well, I hope he gave it back."



"He led Billy Brad to the kitchen, stopping at the hall closet for the rawhide whip"

"He did not," said Mrs. Wix. "He took it away from her, and let her come crying to me for another while he sat on his steps and ate it. I would have come over then, but I saw Mrs. Bradley come out. I supposed, naturally, she meant to punish him; but as I heard nothing of the matter from *her*, I thought it my duty ——"

"Quite right!" said Mr. Bradley genially.

"Because I thought Mrs. Bradley might think your son had got the apple in his own house," said Mrs. Wix.

Mr. Bradley looked at Mrs. Bradley meaningly, and Mrs. Bradley arose.

"We shall see that it does not happen again," she said, leading the way to the door. "Mr. Wix is well, I hope? Good night."

"Well?" she said, when she reëntered the parlor. "So that is where Billy Brad got the apple! He did not steal it, after all. He did not tell me a fib. And the poor child had to be whipped!"

"Yes," said Mr. Bradley gently. "But why didn't you tell us where you got the apple, Billy Brad?"

It was evident that Mr. Bradley did not consider infantile highway robbery a serious crime — at least, not at all as serious as lying.

"Why didn't you tell us about the apple in the first place?" asked Mr. Bradley. "I asked you to tell me. Tell papa now. Just as it was, Billy Brad."

"There was a old noak tree," said Billy Brad eagerly, "and — and — and napples growed on it, and — and — and a slickery old snake wuggled up the big old noak tree, and — and — and it tooked a napple ——"

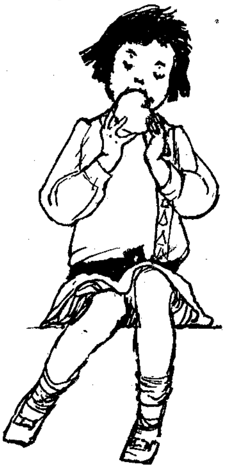
"Careful!" warned Mr. Bradley.

"And — and — and the slickery old snake wuggled down the noak tree," said Billy Brad, very carefully and very slowly, "and — and — and a big old nangel flewed down, and — and — and ——"

Mrs. Bradley opened her lips to speak, but Mr. Bradley motioned her to be silent.

"And — and — and the big old slickery snake gived her the apple, and — and — and the nangel he tooked his swo-word, and he said, 'Get out of my garden!' and — and — and ——"

"For mercy's sake! You poor kiddie!" exclaimed Mr. Bradley, hugging the wee boy tight in his arms. "You poor kiddie! I told him to tell me the story of the apple, and he's been trying to tell me the story of the Garden of Eden!"



"And — and — and there wasn't no old sideboard out in the garden," said Billy Brad, with bravado.

"No, siree, Billy Brad!" said Mr. Bradley. "You knew better than papa that time, didn't you? And I whipped you for telling a fib, when you didn't tell one. So you can have whatever you want, Billy Brad, to square us. Now, think! What do you want most of anything, Billy Brad?"

"Gold teef," said Billy Brad, without the slightest hesitation.

THE AMATEUR GENTLEMAN

BY

JEFFERY FARNOL

AUTHOR OF "THE BROAD HIGHWAY"

ILLUSTRATIONS BY HERMAN PFEIFER

Preceding instalments.—Barnabas Barty, son of the retired champion pugilist of England, coming suddenly into a fortune of £700,000, decides to go to London and become a gentleman. On his journey he meets with Lady Cleone Meredith, who has been thrown from her horse, and in going to her assistance he quarrels with Sir Mortimer Carnaby, the King's favourite. Barnabas learns that Carnaby is plotting to marry Lady Cleone for her fortune, and that she has consented to meet his go-between, a profligate courtier named Chichester, in a lonely spot at sundown. Barnabas arrives at the rendezvous first, forces Chichester to retire, and, when Lady Cleone comes, offers to escort her back to her guardian. In the explanation that follows, Barnabas learns that Lady Cleone had come to the tryst expecting to meet her half-brother, Ronald Barrymaine, a young scapegrace whose gambling exploits have thrown him into Chichester's power. Barnabas tells Lady Cleone that he loves her, and promises to seek out her brother in London and to try to save him. On reaching London he finds Barrymaine and offers to pay his debts if he will end all relations with Chichester; but Chichester foils Barnaby's purpose. He tries to buy up Barrymaine's debts from Jasper Gaunt, the London money-lender, but fails. Returning to Hawkhurst, he overhears a conversation between Lady Cleone and Carnaby which awakens his jealousy; he quarrels with Lady Cleone.

Barnabas Hears No Good of Himself

"SO that is why you dislike Mr. Beverley?" repeated Cleone.

"Yes; and because of his presumption!" said a second voice, at the sound of which Barnabas flushed and started angrily.

"His presumption in what, Mr. Chichester?"

"In his determined pursuit of you."

"Is he in pursuit of me?"

"Cleone — you know he is!"

"But how do you happen to know?"

"From his persecution of poor Ronald, for one thing. He found his way to Ronald's wretched lodging, and tempted the poor fellow with his gold. And when your unfortunate brother refused his money, this utter stranger actually went behind Ronald's back and offered to buy up his debts! Why should any one do so much for an utter stranger?"

"Either because he is very base or very — noble!" said Cleone.

"Noble! I tell you, no man would part with a fortune to benefit a stranger — unless he had a powerful motive!"

"Well?" said Cleone softly.

"Well, Cleone, I happen to know that motive is — yourself! Oh, it is all very simple, Cleone, and very clumsy. This stranger buys the debts of the brother, trusting to the gratitude of the sister. He knows your pride, Cleone, so he would buy your brother and put you under lasting obligation to himself."

"And you say — he tried to pay these debts — without Ronald's knowledge? Are you sure?"

"Quite! And I know, also, that when Ronald's creditor refused, he actually offered to treble the sum! But, indeed, you would be cheap at sixty thousand pounds, Cleone!"

"Oh, hateful!" she cried.

"Crude — yes — and very coarse; but he is young. What, are you going?"

"Yes; pray find my guardian for me."

"First, tell me I may see you again, Cleone, before I leave for London?"

"Yes," said Cleone, after a momentary hesitation; and thereafter came the tread of Mr. Chichester's feet upon the gravel.

Barnabas sighed, a long, bitter sigh, and, looking up, saw Cleone standing before him.

"Ah, dear godmother!" said she lightly. "I hope your Grace was able to hear well?"

"Perfectly, my dear, thank you — every word," nodded the Duchess. "Though twice Mr. Beverley nearly spoilt it all. Dear me, how impetuous you are, sir! He's very handsome when he frowns, don't you think, Cleone?"

"Madam —" began Barnabas angrily.

"Ah! now you're going to quarrel with me. Well, there's the Major — I shall go. If you must quarrel with some one, try Cleone. Oh, Major! pray lend your arm and protection to a poor old defenceless woman." So saying, the Duchess rose, and the Major, bowing gallantly, went off with her.

Barnabas sat staring at the ground, half expecting that Cleone would rise and leave him. But my lady sat leaning back in her chair, her head carelessly averted, but watching him from the corners of her eyes. Yes, he was certainly handsome; and, finding him so, she frowned, and frowning spoke:

"So you meant to buy me, sir — as you would a horse or dog?"

"No," said Barnabas, without looking up.

"It would have been the same thing, sir. You would have put upon me an obligation I could never have hoped to repay!"

"Yes, I see my error now," said Barnabas, his head sinking lower. "I acted for the best; but I am a fool, and a clumsy one, it seems. I meant only to fulfil the mission you gave me, and I blundered. If you can forgive me, do so."

"But why — why did you do it?"

"You asked me to save your brother, and I could see no other way."

"How so? Please explain."

"I meant to free him from the debt which is crushing him down and unmanning him."

"But — oh, don't you see — he would still be in debt — to you?"

"I had forgotten that!" sighed Barnabas.

Surely no man could lie whose eyes were so truthful and steadfast.

"And so you went and offered to — buy up his debts for three times the proper sum?"

"I would have paid whatever was asked."

"And, supposing you had taken over the debt, who did you think would ever repay you?"

"It never occurred to me."

"And you would have done — all this for a — stranger?"

"No, but because of the promise I gave."

"To me?"

"Yes; but, as God sees me, Cleone, I would have looked for no recompense at your hands!"

"Never?"

"Never — unless — I had dreamed it possible that you — could ever have — loved me."

Barnabas was looking at her pleadingly, she knew. But my lady kept her face averted. Wherefore Barnabas sighed and stared at the ground. And presently my lady spoke, but with her face still averted:

"The moon is at the full to-night, I think?"

Barnabas (lifting his head suddenly). "Yes."

Cleone (with a side glance). "Are you riding back to London this evening?"

Barnabas (nodding drearily). "Yes."

Cleone. "It should be glorious to gallop under a full-orbed moon."

Barnabas (shaking his head mournfully). "London is a great way from — here."

Cleone (beginning to twist a ring on her finger nervously). "Do you remember the madman we met — at Oakshott's Barn?"

Barnabas (densely). "Yes."

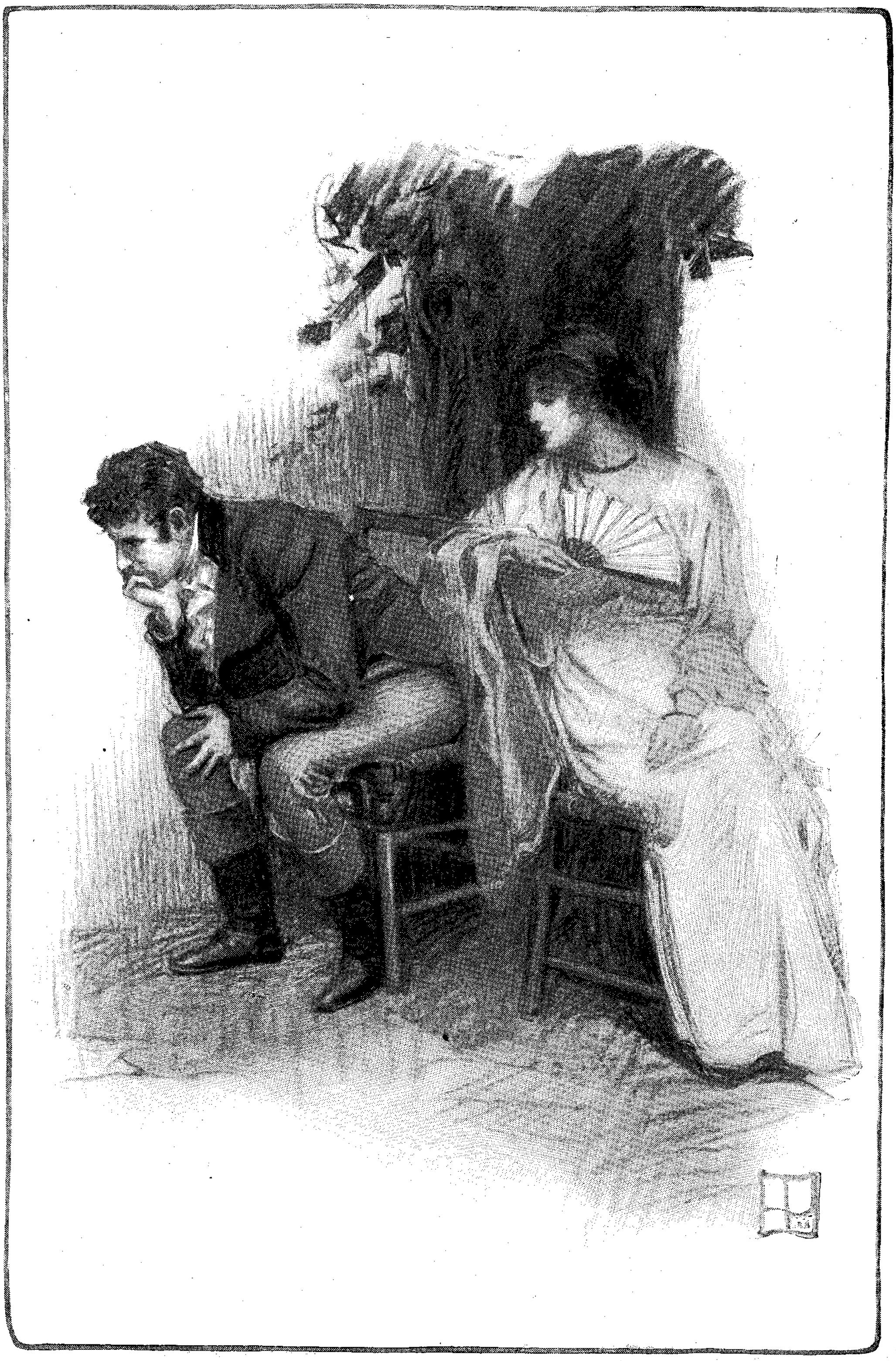
Cleone (frowning at him a little). "Well, do you remember what he prophesied about — an 'orbed moon'— and 'Barnaby Bright'?"

Barnabas (glancing up with sudden interest). "Yes — yes. He said we should meet again at Barnaby Bright — under an orbed moon!"

Cleone (head quite averted now, and speaking over her shoulder). "Do you remember the old finger-post — on the Hawkhurst road?"

Barnabas (leaning towards her eagerly). "Yes — do you mean — oh, Cleone —?"

Cleone (rising and very demure). "Here comes my guardian. Hush! At nine o'clock, sir."



"'SO YOU MEANT TO BUY ME, SIR—AS YOU WOULD A HORSE OR DOG?'"

CHAPTER XXXIX

In Which Barnabas Makes a Surprising Discovery that May Not Surprise the Reader in the Least

Evening, full of dewy scents, of lengthening shadows, of mystery and magic; and over all a rising moon. Thus, as he went, Barnabas' step was light and his heart sang within him for gladness. Then upon the quietude rose a voice:

"How long, O Lord, how long?"

Barnabas beheld one who lay face down upon the grass, and coming nearer, soft-footed, he saw the gleam of silver hair, and stooping touched the prostrate figure. Wherefore the mournful voice spoke again:

"Is it you, young sir? You will grieve, I think, to learn that my atonement is not complete. Clemency is gone — my Beatrix is vanished! I am a day too late! Only one day, sir; and there lies the bitterness."

"Gone!" cried Barnabas. "Gone?"

"She left the place yesterday, very early in the morning — fled away none know whither. Sir, it is very bitter, but God's will be done!"

Then Barnabas sat down in the shadow and took the preacher's hand, seeking to comfort him. "Sir," said he gently, "tell me of it."

"Verily, for it is soon told, sir. I found the place you mentioned. I found there also one — old like myself, a sailor by his look — who sat bowed down with some grievous sorrow. I strove to comfort him; I told him why I was there. And so I learned I was too late, after all; she had gone, and his grief was mine also. And in a while, though he would have me rest there the night, I left, and walked I cared not whither; and, being weary, I lay down here, wishful to die. But I may not die until my atonement be complete, and mayhap some day I shall find her yet. For God is a just God, and his will be done. Amen."

"But why did she go?" cried Barnabas.

"Young sir, the answer is simple. Chichester had discovered her refuge. She was afraid!"

He rose, though like one who is very weary.

"Where are you going?" Barnabas enquired.

"Sir, I take to the road again."

"To search for her?"

"To preach for her! And when I have preached sufficiently, God will bring me to her. So come, young sir, if you will; let us walk together as far as we may."

Presently, walking side by side, they reached a gate, and beyond the gate was a road.

"You are for London, I fancy, young sir?"

"Yes."

"Then we part here. But before I bid you God-speed I would know your name. Mine is Darville — Ralph Darville."

"And mine, sir, is Barnabas — Beverley."

"Beverley!" said the preacher, glancing up quickly. "Of Ashleydown?"

"Sir," said Barnabas, "surely they are all dead?"

"True, true!" nodded the preacher. "The name is extinct. That is how Chichester came into his inheritance. I knew the family well years ago. The brothers died abroad — Robert, the elder, with his regiment in the Peninsula; Francis in battle at sea; and Joan, like my own poor Beatrix, was unhappy and ran away."

"And her name was Joan?" said Barnabas slowly. "Joan — Beverley?"

"Yes."

"Sir, Joan Beverley was my mother! I took her name — Beverley — for a reason."

"Your mother! Ah, I understand it now. You are greatly like her at times. It was the resemblance that puzzled me before. But, sir, if Joan Beverley was your mother, why then ——"

"Then Chichester has no right to their property?"

"No!"

"And — I have?"

"If you can prove your descent."

"Yes," said Barnabas; "but — to whom?"

"You must seek out a Mr. Gregory Dyke, of Lincoln's Inn. He is the lawyer who administered the estate."

"Stay," said Barnabas, "let me write it down."

"And now, young sir," said the preacher, when he had answered all the eager questions of Barnabas as fully as he might, "good-bye. I have a feeling we may meet again, but life is very uncertain; therefore I would beg of you to remember this: as you are strong, be gentle; as you are rich, generous; and as you are young, wise. But, above all, be merciful, and strive to forgive wrongs."

CHAPTER XL

In Which Shall be Found Further Mention of a Certain Finger-Post

The hands of Natty Bell's great watch were pointing to the hour of nine what time Barnabas dismounted at the cross-roads to wait the coming of Cleone.

Now, being old, and having looked upon many and divers men (and women) in its day, it is to be supposed that the ancient finger-post was not in the least surprised to see Barnabas start forward, bareheaded, to meet her who came, swift and light of foot; to see her pause before him, quick-breathing, blushing; to see how glance met glance; to see him stoop to kiss the hand she gave him — and all without a word.

"I began to fear you would not come," said Barnabas, finding voice at last.

"But to-night is — Barnaby Bright, and the prophecy must be fulfilled, sir. And — oh, how wonderful the moon is!"

"Cleone — how beautiful you are!"

And here ensued another silence, while Cleone gazed up at the moon and Barnabas at Cleone.

"Cleone, when will you — marry me?"

Now here my lady stole a quick glance at him.

"You are very — impetuous," she sighed.

"But I — love you," said Barnabas. "If I could only put it into fine sounding phrases!"

"Don't!" said my lady quickly, and laid a slender finger upon his lips.

"Why?" Barnabas enquired, very properly kissing the finger and holding it there.

"Because I grow tired of fine phrases and empty compliments, and because, sir——"

Now, as she spoke, Barnabas beheld the dimple — that most elusive dimple that came and went and came again beside the scarlet lure of her mouth; therefore he drew her nearer until he could look, for a moment, into the depths of her eyes, and lo! in that instant my lady, with her sly bewitchments, her coquettish airs and graces, was gone, and in her place was the maid — quick-breathing, blushing, trembling, all in a moment.

"Ah, no!" she pleaded. "Barnabas, no!"

Then Barnbas sighed and loosed his clasp — but, behold! the dimple was peeping at him again. And in that moment he caught her close, and thus, for the first time, their lips met.

"Cleone!"

"Oh!" she whispered. "Why — did you?"

"Because I love you!"

"No other man ever dared to."

"Oh, Cleone, is it possible you could learn to — love me, in time?"

"I — I don't know."

"Some day, Cleone?"

"It must be nearly half past nine," says my lady, suddenly demure. "I must go; I forgot to tell you — Mr. Chichester is coming to meet me to-night."

"To meet you? Where?" demanded Barnabas, fierce-eyed all at once.

"Here, Barnabas. But don't look so — so murderous!"

"Chichester — here!"

"At a quarter to ten, Barnabas. That is why I must go at — half past nine. Barnabas, stop! Oh, Barnabas, you're crushing me!"

So Barnabas loosed her, albeit regretfully, and stood watching while she dexterously twisted and smoothed and patted her shining hair into some semblance of order.

"Ah, now it's nearly time for me to go, and I haven't had a chance to mention what I came for, which, of course, is all your fault, Barnabas. To-day I received a letter from Ronald. He writes that he has been ill, but is better. And yet I fear he must be very weak still, for, oh! it's such poor, shaky writing. Was he very ill when you saw him?"

"No," answered Barnabas.

"Here is the letter — will you read it? You see, I have no one who will talk to me about poor Ronald; no one seems to have any pity for him — not even my dear tyrant."

So Barnabas took Ronald Barrymaine's letter, and, holding it in the full light of the moon, read as follows:

> *Dearest of Sisters:*
>
> I was unable to keep the appointment I begged for in my last, owing to a sudden indisposition, and, though better now, I am still ailing. I fear my many misfortunes are rapidly undermining my health, and sometimes I sigh for Death and Oblivion. But, dearest Cleone, I forbid you to grieve for me. I am man enough, I hope, to endure my miseries uncomplainingly, as a man and a gentleman should. Chichester has offered me an asylum at his country place near Headcorn. But for him, I tremble to think what would have been my fate long before this. At Headcorn I shall at least be nearer you, my best of sisters, and it is my hope that you may be persuaded to steal away, now and then, to spend an hour with two lonely bachelors and cheer a brother's solitude. Ah, Cleone! Chichester's devotion to you is touching. Such patient adoration must, in time, meet with its reward. By your own confession, you have nothing against him but the fact that he worships you too ardently, and this most women would think a virtue. And, remember, this is the man who has stood by me in adversity. Oh, Cleone, give my friend the answer he seeks, the answer he has sought of you already, the answer which to your despairing brother means more than you can ever guess, the answer whereby you can fulfil the promise you gave our dying mother to help Your unfortunate brother,
>
> RONALD BARRYMAINE.

Now, as he finished reading, Barnabas frowned, tore the letter across in sudden fury, and looked up to find Cleone frowning also.

"You have torn my letter!"

"Abominable!" said Barnabas fiercely.

"How dared you?"

"It is the letter of a coward and weakling! He would sell you to a —" Barnabas choked.

"Mr. Chichester is my brother's friend."

"His enemy!"

"And poor Ronald is sick ——"

"With brandy!"

"Oh — not that!" she cried. "Not that!"

"Didn't you know?"

"I only — dreaded it. His father — died of it. Oh, Barnabas! Save him from — that! You will try, won't you?"

"Yes," said Barnabas, setting his jaw; "I'll try. And I ask you to remember that, if I succeed or not, I shall never expect any recompense from you, never!"

"Unless, Barnabas—" said Cleone softly.

"Unless—you should—some day learn to—love me—just a little, Cleone?"

"Would—just a little satisfy you?"

"No," said Barnabas; "no. I want you all—all—all! Oh, Cleone, will you marry me?"

"You are very persistent, sir. And I must go."

"Not yet; pray not yet."

"Please, Barnabas. I would not care to see Mr. Chichester—to-night."

"No," sighed Barnabas, "you must go. But, first, will you——"

"Not again, Barnabas!" And she gave him her two hands. So he stooped and kissed them.

"And when can I see you again?"

"Ah! who can tell?" she answered. And so, smiling a little, she hastened away.

Now, when she was gone, Barnabas sighed, and turned towards his great black horse. But, even as he did so, he heard a soft sound that was like the faint jingle of spurs; the leaves of the hedge rustled, and out into the moonlight stepped a tall figure, wild of aspect, bareheaded and bare of foot, who, laying his hand upon his bosom, bowed in stately fashion.

"Oh, Barnaby Bright, Barnaby Bright,
The moon's awake, and shines all night!

"Do you remember, Barnaby Bright, how I foretold we should meet again—under an orbed moon? Was I not right? So I followed you, Barnaby Bright—oh, I followed you. And another also, though he—didn't know it. Oho! would you see me conjure you a spirit from the leaves yonder? Ah, but an evil spirit, this! Shall I?"

So saying, the speaker flung up his long arms, and, with his gaze fixed upon a certain part of the hedge, lifted his voice and spoke:

"Oho, lurking spirit among the shadows! Ho, come forth! I summon ye."

There followed a moment's utter silence, then Mr. Chichester stepped out from the shadows.

"Ah, sir," said Barnabas, consulting his watch, "you are just twenty-three minutes before your time! Nevertheless you are too late."

"Too late, sir?" repeated Mr. Chichester softly, shaking his head. "No—indeed, I think not. Howbeit there are times and occasions when solitude appeals to me; this is one. Pray, therefore, be good enough to—go."

"First, sir," said Barnabas, bowing with aggressive politeness, "first, I humbly beg leave to speak with you, to——"

"Sir," said Mr. Chichester, "sir, I have no desire for your speeches. They, like yourself, I find a little trying, and vastly uninteresting. Pray go away, and let me stare upon the moon and twiddle my thumbs until——"

"If it is the Lady Cleone you wait for, she is gone!" said the youth, quick and impetuous.

"Ah!" sighed Mr. Chichester, viewing Barnabas through narrowed eyes. "Gone, you say? But then, young sir—but then, Cleone is one of your tempting, warm, delicious creatures! Cleone is a skilled coquette to whom all men are—men. To-night it is you—to-morrow——"

Mr. Chichester's right hand vanished into his bosom as Barnabas strode forward; but, on the instant, Billy Button was between them.

"Stay, my lord!" he cried. "Look upon this face. 'Tis the face of my friend Barnaby Bright; but, my lord, it is also the face of Joan's son. You've heard tell of Joan Beverley?"

Now, in the pause that followed, as Mr. Chichester gazed at Barnabas, his narrowed eyes opened little by little, his compressed lips grew slowly loose, and the tasselled cane slipped from his fingers and lay neglected.

"Sir," said Barnabas at last, "I am the lawful son of Joan Beverley, whose maiden name I took for—a purpose. I have but to prove my claim and I can dispossess you of the inheritance you hold. But, sir, I have enough for my needs, and I am, therefore, prepared to forgo my just claim—on a condition."

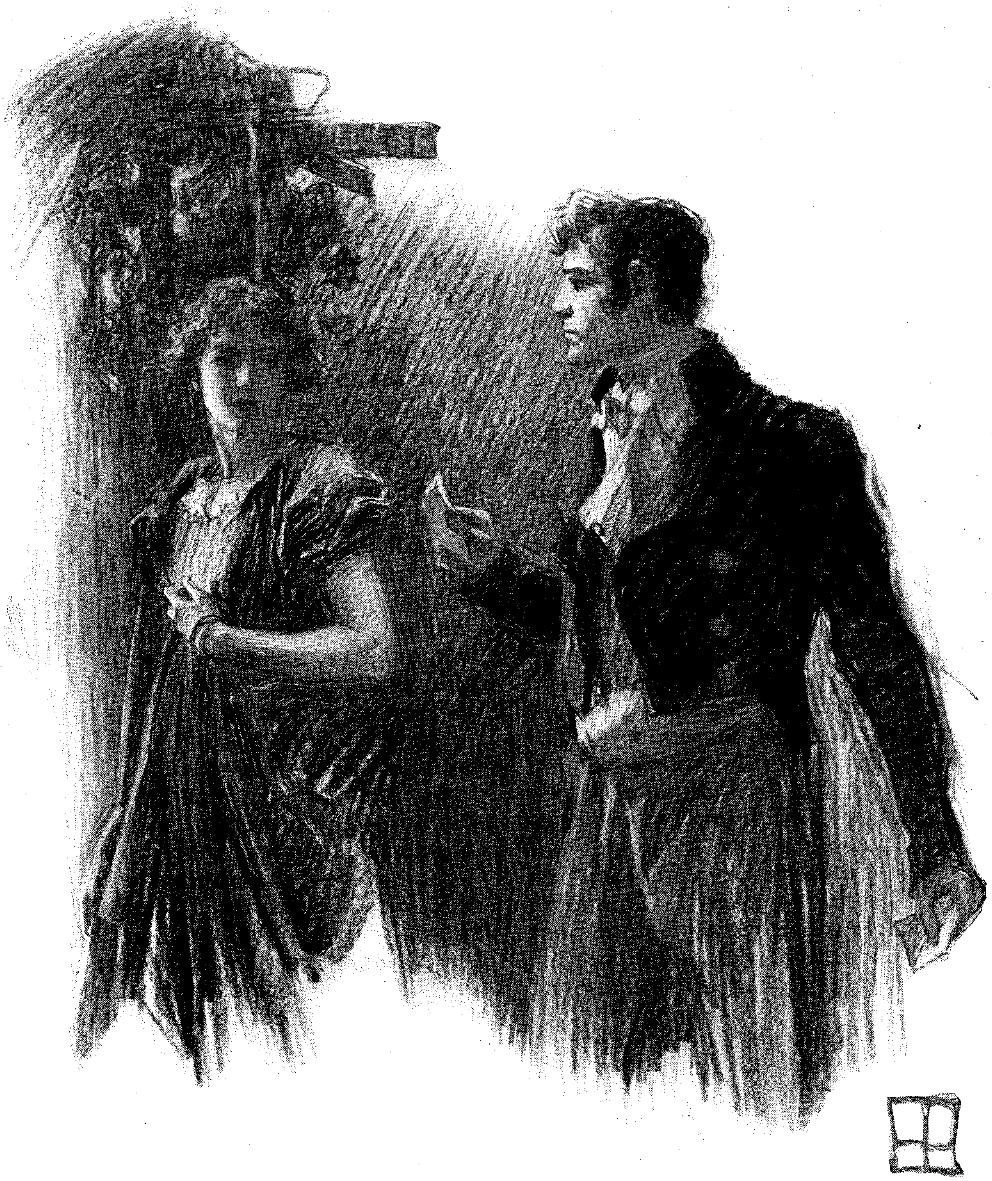
Mr. Chichester neither moved nor spoke.

"My condition," Barnabas continued, "is this: that, from this hour, you loose whatever hold you have upon Ronald Barrymaine—that you have no further communication with him, either by word or letter. Failing this, I institute proceedings at once, and will dispossess you as soon as may be. Sir, you have heard my condition; it is for you to answer."

But, as he ended, Billy Button pointed a shaking finger downwards at the grass midway between them, and spoke.

"Look!" he whispered. "Look! Do you not see it—bubbling so dark, down there in the grass? Ah! it reaches your feet, Barnaby Bright. But—look yonder, it rises to his heart—look!" And, with a sudden wild gesture, he pointed to Chichester's rigid figure. "Blood!" he cried, "Blood! Cover it up! Oh, hide it—hide it!" Then, turning about, he sped away, his muffled buttons jingling faintly as he went, and so presently was gone.

Then Barnabas loosed his horse and mounted, and, with never a glance or a word to the silent figure beneath the finger-post, galloped away Londonwards.



"BARNABAS TORE THE LETTER ACROSS IN SUDDEN FURY. 'ABOMINABLE!' HE SAID FIERCELY"

CHAPTER XLI

In Which Barnabas Makes a Bet and Receives a Warning

THE tenth of July was approaching, and the Polite World was stirred to its politest depths. In the clubs speculation was rife and betting-books fluttered everywhere.

Yes, indeed; all the world was agog, rich and poor, high and low. Thus, then, the perspicacious waiter at the George knew at once that the tall young gentleman in the violet coat with silver buttons, buckled hat, and glossy hessians was none other than a certain Mr. Beverley, who had succeeded in entering his horse at the last possible moment, and who, though an outsider with not the remotest chance of winning, was, nevertheless, something of a buck and dandy. Therefore the perspicacious waiter at the George viewed Barnabas with the eye of reverence, his back subservient, his napkin eloquent of eager service.

"A chair, sir?" Here a flick of the officious napkin. "Now — shall we say a chop, sir?"

"No, thank you," said Barnabas, laying

aside hat and cane. "But you can bring me a bottle of Burgundy and the *Gazette*."

"Yessir — himmediately, sir."

As the waiter, with many flicks of the napkin, left the room, Barnabas became aware of voices and loud laughter from the adjacent coffee-room, and was roused by the mention of his own name in soft, deliberate tones that he instantly recognized:

"Ah, so you have met this Mr. Beverley?"

"Yes," drawled another, deeper voice. "The Duchess introduced him to me. Who the deuce is he, Chichester?"

"My dear Carnaby, pray ask Devenden, or Jerningham; he's their protégé, not mine."

"Sir," broke in the Viscount's voice, "Mr. Beverley is — my friend!"

"And mine also, I trust!" said the Marquis.

"Exactly!" rejoined Mr. Chichester's smooth tones; "and consequently, despite his mysterious origin, he is permitted to ride in the steeplechase among the élite of the sporting world."

"And why not, b'gad?" Captain Slingsby's voice sounded gruffer than usual. "I'll warrant him a true-blue sportsman, every inch. Sit a horse with any man, bird at a fence, and ready to give or take odds on his chances, I'll swear."

"Now, really,"— Mr. Chichester's tone was softer than ever,—"he would seem to be a general favourite here. Still, it would at least be interesting to know exactly who and what he is."

"Yes," Sir Mortimer's voice chimed in; "and only right, in justice to ourselves. Seems to me I've seen him, somewhere or other, before we were introduced. Be shot if I know where, though."

"In the — country, perhaps?" the Viscount suggested.

"Like as not," returned Sir Mortimer carelessly. "But, as Chichester says, it *is* devilish irregular to allow any Tom, Dick, or Harry to enter for this race. If, as Sling suggests, the fellow is willing to back himself, it would at least be well to know that he could cover his bets."

"Sir Mortimer!"— the Viscount's tone was colder and sharper than before,—"you will permit me, in the first place, to tell you that his name is neither Tom nor Dick nor Harry. And, in the second place, I would remind you that the gentleman honours me with his friendship. And, in the third place, that I suffer no one to cast discredit upon my friends. D'you take me, Sir Mortimer?" There followed a moment of utter stillness, then the sudden scrape and shuffle of feet. But, before Sir Mortimer could reply, the door opened and Barnabas appeared.

"Viscount," said he, "for that I thank you most sincerely, most deeply. But, indeed, it will not be necessary, seeing I myself am here to answer such questions as I think — proper."

"Ah, Mr.— Beverley!" drawled Sir Mortimer, seating himself on the table and crossing his legs, "you come pat — and, since you are here, I desire a word with you."

"As many as you wish, sir," answered Barnabas, and he bowed his curly head.

"It would seem, Mr.— Beverley, that you are something of a mystery; and I, for one, don't like mysteries. Then, it has been suggested that you and I have met before our introduction, and, egad! now I come to look at you more attentively, your face does seem familiar, and I am curious to know whom you may happen to be."

"Sir," said Barnabas, "such rare condescension, such lively interest in my concerns, touches me deeply."

"Suppose, sir," retorted Sir Mortimer, his cheek flushing, "suppose you answer my question, and tell me plainly who and what you are?"

"Sir," answered Barnabas gently, "I humbly beg leave to remark that as to who I am can concern only my — friends. As to what I am concerns only my Maker and myself."

"Oh, vastly fine!" nodded Sir Mortimer. "But that's no answer."

"And yet, I greatly fear it must suffice — for you, sir," sighed Barnabas.

"Now look you, sir," said Sir Mortimer slowly, and with a menace in his eyes, "when I trouble to ask a question, I expect an answer."

"Alas, sir, even your expectations may occasionally be disappointed," said Barnabas, beginning to smile. "But, as to my resources, I do not lack for money, and am ready, here and now, to lay you a thousand guineas that I shall be one of the first three to pass the winning-post on the tenth."

Sir Mortimer frowned, and his powerful right hand clenched itself; then he laughed.

"Egad! you have plenty of assurance, sir. It is just possible that you may have ridden — now and then?"

"Sufficiently to know one end of a horse from the other, sir," retorted Barnabas.

"And you are willing to bet a thousand guineas that you ride third among all the best riders in the three kingdoms, are you?"

"No, sir," said Barnabas; "the bet was a rash one. I beg leave to withdraw it. Instead, I will bet five thousand guineas that I pass the winning-post before you do, Sir Mortimer."

"You're not mad, are you?" demanded Carnaby, his red under lip curling.

"Sir," said Barnabas, taking out his memorandum-book, "do you take my bet?"

"Take it!" cried Sir Mortimer fiercely. "I'll double it — make it ten thousand, sir!"

"Fifteen, if you wish," said Barnabas.

"No, by heaven! but I'll add another five and make it an even twenty thousand!"

"May I suggest you make it thirty?" enquired Barnabas.

"Ha! May I venture to ask how much higher you are prepared to go?".

"Why, sir," said Barnabas thoughtfully, "I have some odd six hundred thousand pounds, and I am prepared to risk — half."

"Vastly fine, sir!" laughed Sir Mortimer. "Why not put it at a round million and have done with it? No, egad! Twenty thousand will suit me very well, sir!"

"Then you take me at that figure, Sir Mortimer?"

"Yes; I bet you twenty thousand guineas that you do not pass the winning-post ahead of me! And, what's more, non-starters to forfeit their money! Oh, egad, I'll take you!"

"And I also," said Mr. Chichester, opening his betting-book. "Gentlemen, you are all witnesses of the bet. Come, Viscount, Slingsby, here's good money going a-begging."

But the others sat very silent, so that the scratch of Sir Mortimer's pencil could be plainly heard as he duly registered his bet — which done, he turned his attention to Barnabas.

"Hum!" said he musingly. "It sticks in my mind that I have seen you — somewhere or other — before we met at Sir George Annesley's. Perhaps you will tell me where?"

"With pleasure, sir," answered Barnabas. "It was in Annesley Wood, rather early in the morning. And you wore ——"

"Annesley — Wood!" Sir Mortimer's careless, lounging air vanished, and he stared at Barnabas with dilating eyes.

"And you wore, I remember, a bottle-green coat, which I had the misfortune to tear, sir."

And here there fell a silence once more, but ominous now, and full of menace. Then, all at once, Sir Mortimer was on his feet and had caught up a heavy riding-whip, and thus he and Barnabas fronted each other, eye to eye, each utterly still, yet very much on the alert.

And now upon this tense silence came the soft, smooth tones of Mr. Chichester:

"Pray, Mr. Beverley, may I speak a word with you — in private?"

"If the company will excuse us," Barnabas replied; whereupon Mr. Chichester rose and led the way into the adjoining room.

"Sir," said he, "I would remind you that, the last time we met, you threatened me that unless I agreed to — certain conditions, you would dispossess me of my inheritance."

"And I repeat it," said Barnabas.

"Oh, sir, save your breath and listen," smiled Mr. Chichester; "for, let me tell you, threats beget threats! Here is one which I think you will heed!" So saying, he took from his pocket a letter and laid it upon the table. Barnabas glanced at it, hesitated; then, stooping, read:

Dear Lady Cleone:

I write this to warn you that the person calling himself Mr. Beverley, and posing as a gentleman of wealth and breeding, is, in reality, nothing better than a rich vulgarian — one Barnabas Barty, son of a country innkeeper. The truth of which shall be proved to your complete satisfaction, whenever you will, by Yours always humbly to command,

WILFRED CHICHESTER.

Now, when he had finished reading, Barnabas sank down into a chair, and, leaning his elbows upon the table, hid his face between his hands; seeing which, Mr. Chichester laughed softly and, taking up the letter, turned to the door.

"Sir," said he, "if you presume to interfere with me again in any way, Cleone shall know you for the impudent impostor you are!"

But Barnabas sat rigid, and did not move or lift his heavy head, even when the door opened and closed and he knew he was alone.

CHAPTER XLII

The Duchess Gives Advice

My dear Mr. Beverley:

The country down here, though delightfully Arcadian and quite idyllic, is dreadfully quiet, and I freely confess that I generally prefer a man to a hop-pole. As for Cleone, dear bird, she yawns until my own eyes water. In this deplorable situation, I turn to you, dear Mr. Beverley, and write these hasty lines to entreat — nay, to command you to come and cheer our solitude. Cleone has a new gown she is dying to wear, and I have much that you must patiently listen to, so that I may truly subscribe myself,

Your grateful friend,

FANNY CAMBERHURST.

Having read this note for the seventh time, Barnabas, whirling behind two gallant bays, on the road to Hawkhurst, sighed and smiled. Evening was falling, and, behold, before them at a little distance stood a certain finger-post pointing the wayfarer:

TO LONDON — TO HAWKHURST

at sight of which weather-worn piece of timber Barnabas must needs smile, though very tenderly, and thereafter fall a-sighing. But all at once he checked his sighs to stare in amazement, for there, demurely seated beneath the finger-post, and completely engrossed in her needlework, was a small, lonely figure.

"Why — Duchess!" Barnabas exclaimed, and, giving Peterby the reins, stepped out of the phaeton.

"Ah! is that you, Mr. Beverley?" sighed the Duchess, looking up from her embroidery. "You find me here, sitting by the wayside, because I have been driven away by the tantrums of an undutiful goddaughter and the barbarity of a bloodthirsty buccaneer. And all because I had the forethought to tell Cleone her nose was red,— which it was; sunburn, you know,— and because I remarked that the Captain was growing as rotund as a Frenchman. So here I am, Mr. Beverley, very lonely and very sad, but industrious, you see. But indeed you're very silent, Mr. Beverley — though I'm glad to see you are here so well to time."

"To time, madam?"

"Because, you see, I've won my bet. Oh, yes, indeed. I bet Cleone an India shawl against a pair of beaded mittens that you would be here to-day before ten o'clock. Talking of Cleone, sir, she's in the orchard. So, of course, you're dying to be gone — now aren't you?"

"No," Barnabas replied, and, turning, bade Peterby drive on to the house. "You see, madam, I need your advice," he added gravely, as the carriage rolled away.

"Ah, how I love giving people advice!"

"Duchess, I — I have a confession to make."

"A confession, sir? Then I needn't pretend to work any longer; besides, I always prick myself. There!" And, rolling the embroidery into a ball, she gave it to Barnabas.

"Why, then, madam, in the first place, I ——"

"Yes?"

"I — that is to say, you — must understand that — in the first place ——"

"You've said 'first place' twice!"

"Yes — oh! did I? Indeed, I — I fear it is going to be even harder to speak of than I thought, and I have been nerving myself to tell you ever since I started from London."

"To tell me what?"

"That which may provoke your scorn of me and earn me Cleone's bitterest contempt."

"Why, then, sir, don't say another word about it."

"Ah, but I must — indeed I must! For I know now that to balk at it, to — to keep silent any longer — would be dishonourable — and the act of a coward!"

"Oh dear me!" sighed the Duchess. "I fear you are going to be dreadfully heroic about something!"

"Believe me," sighed Barnabas, beginning to stride restlessly to and fro, "the full significance of my conduct never occurred to me until it was forced on my notice by — by another, and then"— he paused and brushed the damp curls from his brow. "To-day I tried to write to Cleone — to tell her everything; but I — couldn't!"

"So you decided to come and tell me first, which was very nice of you," nodded the Duchess — "oh, very right and proper!"

"First, then," said Barnabas, coming to a halt and looking down at her, steadfast-eyed, "you must know that my real name is — Barty."

"Barty?" repeated the Duchess, raising her brows. "Mm! I like Beverley much better."

"Beverley was my mother's name. She was Joan Beverley."

"Joan? Joan Beverley? Why, y-e-s, I think I remember her, and the talk there was. Joan? Ah, yes, to be sure — very handsome and — disappeared. No one knew why, but now — I begin to understand. You would suggest ——"

"That she became the honourable wife of my father, John Barty, the celebrated pugilist and ex-champion of England, now keeper of a village inn," said Barnabas, speaking all in a breath, but maintaining his steadfast gaze.

"Eh?" cried the Duchess. "Eh, sir, an innkeeper! And your mother — actually married him? Handsome Joan Beverley — married to an — innkeeper! Horrible!"

"My father is an honourable man!" said Barnabas, with upflung head.

"Your father is — an innkeeper!"

"And — my father, madam!"

"The wretch!" exclaimed the Duchess.

"And his son — loves Cleone!"

"Dreadful! Frightful!" cried the Duchess. "An innkeeper's son! Beer and skittles and clay pipes! Oh, shocking!" And she turned her back on him.

"Ah," cried Barnabas, "so you scorn me — already?"

"Of course."

"For being — an innkeeper's son?"

"For — telling of it!"

"And yet," said Barnabas, "I think Barnabas Barty is a better man than Barnabas Beverley, and a more worthy lover; and as Barnabas Barty I bid your Grace good-bye!"

"Where are you going?"

"To the village inn, madam — my proper place, it seems. But this evening, unless you have told Cleone, I shall. And now, if your Grace will have the kindness to send my servant to me ——"

"And to-night you will tell Cleone?"

"Yes."

"And, of course, she will scorn you for an impudent impostor!"

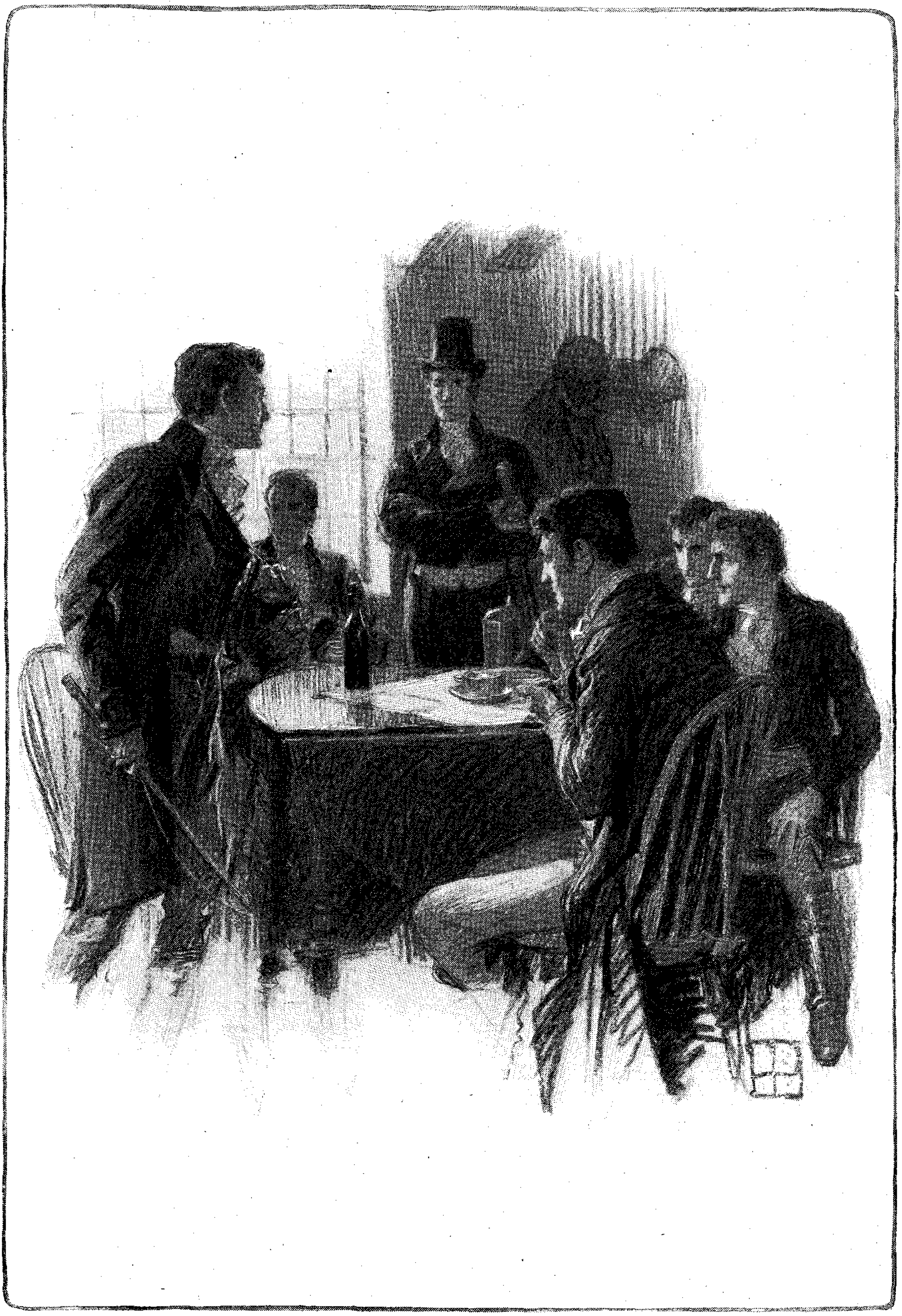
"And yet — I must tell her!" he groaned.

"And, afterwards, where shall you go?"

"Anywhere," he sighed hopelessly.

"And — the race?"

"Will be run without me."



"ALL AT ONCE SIR MORTIMER WAS ON HIS FEET AND HAD CAUGHT UP A HEAVY RIDING-WHIP"

"And your friends — the Marquis, Viscount Devenden, and the rest?"

"Will, I expect, turn their gentlemanly backs upon me — as you yourself have done. So, madam, I thank you for your past kindness, and bid you — good-bye!" And he started slowly down the road.

"Come back, sir!"

"Why, madam?" he enquired, pausing.

"Because — oh, because you are running off with my precious needlework, of course. In your pocket, sir — the left one!"

So, perforce, Barnabas came back to give the Duchess her embroidery. But, behold, his hand was caught and held between two others, which, though very fragile, were very imperious.

"Barnabas," said the Duchess very softly. "Oh, dear me, I'm glad you told me — oh, very! I hoped you would!"

"Hoped? Why — why, madam, you — then you knew —?"

"All about it, of course! Oh, you needn't stare — it wasn't witchcraft. It was this letter — read it." And, taking a letter from her reticule, she gave it to Barnabas, and watched him while he read:

To her Grace the Duchess of Camberhurst.

Madam:

In justice to yourself, I take occasion to warn your Grace against the person calling himself Barnabas Beverley. He is in reality an impudent impostor of humble birth and mean extraction. His real name and condition I will prove absolutely to your Grace at another time.

Your Grace's most humble obedt.
Wilfred Chichester.

"So you see I'm not a witch, sir — oh, no; I'm only an old woman with a very sharp eye for faces, a genius for asking questions, and the feminine capacity of adding two and two together and making them — eight. So, upon reading this letter, I made certain enquiries on my own account, with the result that yesterday I drove over to a certain inn called the Coursing Hound, and talked with your father. Very handsome he is, too — as he always was; and I saw him in the hey-day of his fame, remember. Well, I sipped his ale,— very good ale I found it,— and while I sipped we talked. He is very proud of his son, it seems, and he even showed me a letter this son had written him. Ha! Joan Beverley was to have married an ugly old wretch of a marquis, and John Barty is handsome still! But an innkeeper, hum!"

"So — that was why my mother ran away!"

"And Wilfred Chichester knows of this, and will tell Cleone, of course!"

"I think not — at least, not yet," answered Barnabas thoughtfully. "You see, he is using this knowledge as a weapon against me."

"Why?"

"I promised to help Ronald Barrymaine——"

"That wretched boy! Well?"

"And the only way to do so was to remove him from Chichester's influence altogether. So I warned Mr. Chichester that, unless he forswore Barrymaine's society, I would, as Joan Beverley's son and heir to the Beverley heritage, prove my claim and dispossess him."

"You actually threatened Wilfred Chichester with this, and forgot that finding you your mother's son would prove you to be your father's also?"

"Yes; I — I only remembered my promise."

"But — can't you see, if you force him to expose you, it will mean your social ruin?"

"But then, I gave — her — my promise."

"Oh, Barnabas," said the Duchess, looking up at him with her young beautiful eyes, that were so like Cleone's, "what a superb fool you are! And your father *is* only a village innkeeper!"

"No, madam; he was champion of all England."

"Oh!" sighed the Duchess, shaking her head, "that poor Sir Mortimer Carnaby! But as for you, sir, you're a fool — either a very clumsy or a very unselfish one. Anyhow, you're a fool, you know! And yet, oh dear me! My tastes are so peculiar that there are some fools I could almost — love. So you may give me your arm — Barnabas."

He obeyed mechanically, and they went on down the road together in silence until they came to a pair of tall, hospitable gates.

"Ah, there's Cleone on the terrace, with the Captain," said the Duchess. She raised her voice.

"My bird!" she called in dulcet tones. "Clo dear! Cleone, my lamb, here is Barnabas; I found him — under the finger-post, my dove!"

My lady turned, gave the least little start in the world, was surprised, glad, demure, all in the selfsame minute, and, taking the arm of her tyrant, led him down the terrace steps.

"Ha!" cried the Captain, "my dear fellow, we're glad — I say we're all of us glad to see you. Welcome to the Gables — eh, Clo?"

And Cleone? With what gracious ease she greeted him! With what clear eyes she looked at him! With what demure dignity she gave him her white hand to kiss!

"Clo dear," said the Duchess, "they're going to talk horses and racing and bets and things — I know they are; your arm, my love. Now, lead on, gentlemen. And now, my dear," she continued, speaking in Cleone's ear as Barnabas and the Captain moved on, "he adores you!"

"Really, godmother, how clever of you!" said Cleone, her eyes brimful of merriment.

"Yes, my Lady Pert, he worships you, and, consequently, is deceiving you with every breath he draws!"

"Deceiving me!"

"With every moment he lives!"

"But — oh, godmother! Deceiving me?"

"His very name is false!"

"What do you mean? Ah, no, no — I'm sure he would not! And yet — oh, godmother, why?"

"Because — hush! Cleone, he's immensely rich, one of the wealthiest young men in London, and — hush! He would be — loved for himself alone. So, Cleone, listen. He may perhaps come to you with some wonderful story of poverty and humble birth. He may tell you his father was only a — a tinker, or a — an innkeeper! Oh dear me, so delightfully romantic! Therefore, loving him as you do ——"

"I don't!"

"From the sole of your foot ——"

"Godmother!"

"To the crown of your wilful head, your heart, I say, Cleone, may have its way, because, with all his wealth, he has a father who — hush! — at one time was the greatest man in all England — a powerful man, Clo, a famous man — indeed, a man of the most striking capabilities!"

The night was very warm and very still, and upon the quietude stole the sound of the brook — softer yet more insistent than the whisper of wind among leaves — a soothing, murmurous sound that seemed to make the pervading quiet but the more complete. The waning moon was bright enough to show the look in Cleone's eyes and the quiver of her mouth as Barnabas stooped above her.

"Cleone!" he whispered. "Cleone, can you — do you — love me? Oh, my white lady, my woman that I love, do you love me?"

She did not speak, but her eyes answered him; and in that moment Barnabas stooped and kissed her, and held her close and closer until she sighed and stirred in his embrace.

Then all at once he groaned and set her down, and stood before her with bent head.

"My dear," said he, "oh, my dear!"

"Barnabas?"

"Forgive me! I didn't mean even to touch your hand until I had confessed my deceit. Oh, my dear, I am not — the fine gentleman you think me. I am only a very — humble fellow. The son of a village — innkeeper. Your eyes were — kind to me just now, but oh, Cleone, if so humble a fellow is — unworthy, as I fear — I — I will try to — forget."

Very still she stood, looking upon his bent head. Now when she spoke her voice was very tender:

"Can you — ever forget?"

"I will — try!"

"Then — oh, Barnabas, don't! Because I — think I could — love this — humble fellow, Barnabas."

CHAPTER XLIII

How Barnabas Found His Manhood

"Oh — hif you please, sir!"

Barnabas started, and presently espied a figure in the shadow of the osiers — a very small figure, upon whose diminutive jacket were numerous buttons that glittered under the moon.

"Why — it's Milo of Crotona!" said Cleone.

"Yes, my lady — hif you please, it are."

"But — what are you doing here? How did you know where to find us?"

"'Cause as I came up the drive, m' lady, I jest 'appened to see you a-walking together; so I followed you, I did, m' lady."

"Followed us?" repeated Cleone. "Oh!"

"And then — I thought as 'ow I'd better — wait a bit. So I waited, I did." Milo of Crotona looked from Barnabas to Cleone with eyes wide and profoundly innocent.

"And what brings you so far from London?" enquired Barnabas, rather hurriedly.

"Coach, sir."

"And you brought your master with you, of course. Is the Viscount here?"

"No, m'lady — I 'ad to leave 'im be'ind 'count of 'im being unfit to travel."

"Is he ill?"

"Oh, no, not hill, m'lady — only shot, 'e is."

"Shot!" exclaimed Barnabas. "How — where?"

"In the harm, sir; all on 'count of 'is 'oss, sir."

"His horse?"

"Yessir. 'S arternoon, it were. Ye see, for a long time I ain't been easy in me mind about them stables where 'im and you keeps your 'osses, sir. So 's arternoon, as we was passing the end o' the street, I sez to m' lud, I sez, 'Won't your ludship jest pop your nob round the corner and squint your peepers at the 'osses?' I sez. So 'e laughs, easy like, and in we pops. And the first thing we see was your 'ead groom, Mr. Martin, wiv blood on 'is mug and one peeper in mourning, a-wrastling wiv two coves, and our 'ead groom, Standish, wiv another of 'em. Jest as we run up, down goes Mr. Martin; but, afore they could maul 'im wiv their trotters, there's m'lud wiv 'is fists an' me wiv a pitchfork as 'appened to lie 'andy. Then off goes a barker, and off go the coves, and there's m'lud 'olding onto 'is arm and swearing 'eavens'ard. And that's all, sir."

"And these men were — trying to get at the horses?"

"Ah! Meant to nobble Moonraker, they did, sir; and it looked to me as if they meant to do for the Terror as well."

"And is the Viscount much hurt?"

"Why, no, sir. And it were only 'is whip-arm. 'Urts a bit, o' course, but 'e managed to write you a letter, 'e did; an' 'ere it is." So Barnabas took the letter, and, holding it in the moonlight where Cleone could see it, they together made out these words:

> *My dear Bev*:
>
> There is durty work afoot. Some Raskells have tried to lame Moonraker, but, thanks to my Imp and your man Martin, quite unsuccessfully. But I am greatly pirtirbed for the safety of Moonraker, and mean to get him into safer quarters, and advise you to do likewise. Also, though your horse — the Terror, as the stable-boys call him — is not even in the betting, it almost seems, from what I can gather, that they meant to nobble him as well. Therefore I think you were wiser to return at once, and I am anxious to see you on another matter as well. Your bets with Carnaby and Chichester have somehow got about and are the talk of the town, and, from what I hear, much to your disparagement, I fear.
>
> A pity to shorten your stay in the country, but under the circumstances most advisable.
>
> Yours ever, &c. DICK.

Now here Barnabas looked at Cleone and sighed, and Cleone, sighing also, nodded.

"You must go," said she very softly.

"Yes, I must go; and yet — it is so very soon, Cleone!"

"Yes, it is dreadfully soon, Barnabas. But what does he mean by saying that people are talking of you to your disparagement?"

"I think because I, a rank outsider, ventured to lay a wager against Sir Mortimer Carnaby."

"Do you mean you bet him that you would win the race, Barnabas?"

"No; only that I would beat him"

"But oh, Barnabas, he *is* the race! Surely you know he and the Viscount are favourites?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Then you do think you can win?"

"I mean to try — very hard!" said Barnabas.

"And I begin to think," said Cleone, struck by his resolute eyes and mouth —"oh, Barnabas, I begin to think you — almost may!"

"And if I did?"

"Then I should be very — proud of you."

"And if I lost?"

"Then you would be ——"

"Yes?"

"Just ——"

"Yes, Cleone?"

"My Barnabas! Ah, no, no!" she whispered suddenly. "You are crushing me — dreadfully and — that boy has terribly sharp eyes!"

"But he's not looking; and oh, Cleone, how can I bear to leave you so soon? You are more to me than anything else in the world. You are my life, my soul, my honour — oh, my dear!"

"Then, Barnabas, you will go?"

"Yes, I'll go — because I love you!"

Then Cleone drew him deeper into the shade of the willows, and, with a sudden swift gesture, reached up her hands and set them about his neck. And now the Duchess, strolling after the truants, came full upon Master Milo.

"Oh, lud!" exclaimed the Duchess, starting back. "Dear me, what a strange little boy! Who are you?" she demanded.

"I'm Viscount Devenden's con-fee-dential groom, ma'm, I am!" said he coldly.

"Groom?" said the Duchess, staring. "What a very small one, to be sure!"

"It ain't inches as counts wiv 'osses, ma'm — or hanythink else, ma'm; it's nerve as counts."

"Why, yes; you seem to have plenty of it!"

"Well, ma'm, there ain't much as I trembles at, there ain't."

"And such a pretty child, too!" sighed the Duchess.

"Child, ma'm? I ain't no child; I'm a groom, I am. Child yourself, ma'm!"

"Lud! I do believe he's even paying me compliments! How old are you, boy?"

"A lot more'n you think, ma'm."

"And what's your name?"

"Milo, ma'm — Milo o' Crotona."

"Milo of Crotona!" repeated the Duchess, her eyes wider than ever. "But he was a giant who slew an ox with his fist and ate it whole!"

"Why, ma'm, I'm oncommon fond of oxes — roasted, I am."

"Well," said the Duchess, "you are the very smallest giant I ever saw. And pray, giant, what may you be doing here?"

"Come up on the coach, I did, to take Mr. Beverley back wiv me, 'cause' is 'oss ain't safe."

"Not safe! What do you mean, boy?"

"Some coves got in and tried to nobble Moonraker and 'im."

"Nobble, boy?"

"Lame 'em, ma'm; put 'em out o' the running."

"The wretches! But where is Mr. Beverley?"

"Why, I ain't looked, ma'm, but they're down by the brook, behind them bushes, they are."

"Oh, are they!" said the Duchess. "Hum!"

"No, ma'm; 'e's a-coming, and so's she."

"Why, Barnabas," cried the Duchess, "what's all this I hear about your horse? What is the meaning of it?"

"That I must go back to London to-night, Duchess."

"Leave to-night? Absurd!"

"And yet, madam, Cleone seems to think I must, and so does Viscount Devenden; see what he writes."

So the Duchess took the Viscount's letter, and, having deciphered it with some difficulty, turned upon Barnabas with admonishing finger upraised:

"So you've been betting, eh? And with Sir Mortimer Carnaby and Mr. Chichester, of all people!"

"Yes, madam."

"Ah! You backed the Viscount, I suppose?"

"No; I backed myself, Duchess."

"Gracious goodness!"

"But only to beat Sir Mortimer Carnaby."

"You didn't bet much, I hope?"

"Twenty thousand pounds."

"Not — each?"

"Yes, madam."

"Forty thousand pounds! Against a favourite! Cleone, my dear," said the Duchess, "this Barnabas of ours is either a madman or a fool! Forty thousand pounds! Well, it will at least buy you notoriety, and that is next to fame."

"I hadn't thought of that," said Barnabas.

"And supposing your horse had been lamed and you couldn't ride — how then?"

"Why, then I forfeit the money, madam."

Now here the Duchess frowned thoughtfully, and thereafter said "Ha!" so suddenly that Cleone started and hurried to her side.

"Dear godmother, what is it?"

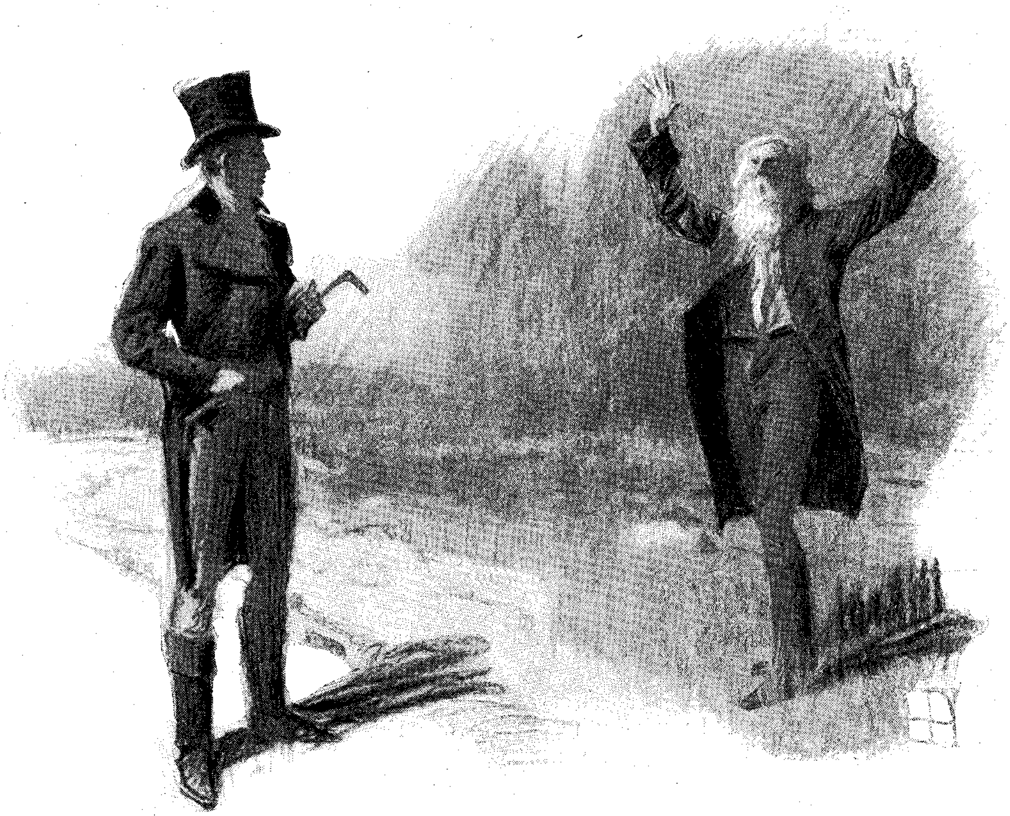
"You are right, Cleone; he must go to London — now, this very instant! Unless you prefer to forfeit your money, Barnabas!"

"Come here, giant," she called, as Barnabas turned towards Cleone, "and promise me to take great care of Mr. Beverley!"

"Yes, ma'm — all right, ma'm," replied Master Milo, with his superb air. "'E'll be all right along o' me, ma'm, 'e will."

"For that," cried the Duchess, catching him by two of his gleaming buttons, "for that I mean to kiss you, giant!"

And Cleone and Barnabas? Well, it so chanced, her Grace's back was towards them; while as for Master Milo — abashed, he became in very truth a child, though one utterly unused to the motherly touch of a tender woman's lips; therefore he suffered the embrace with closed eyes. Then he turned and



"'DO YOU REMEMBER HOW I FORETOLD WE SHOULD MEET AGAIN?'"

followed Barnabas, who was already striding away across the wide lawn, his head carried high, a new light in his eyes, and a wondrous great joy at his heart. And presently, being come to the hospitable gates, he turned with bared head to look back at the two women. Side by side, with arms entwined, they stood, to watch young Barnabas, in the eyes of each an expression alike, yet dissimilar. Then, with a flourish of his hat, Barnabas went on down the road, past the finger-post, with Milo of Crotona's small top-boots twinkling at his side.

CHAPTER XLIV

In Which the Terror Justifies His Name

THE chill of dawn was in the air as the chaise began to rumble over the London cobble-stones, whereupon Master Milo roused himself, and sat suddenly very upright, with his eyes as round and bright as his buttons.

"Are you tired, Imp?" enquired Barnabas.

"Tired, sir? Ho, no, sir — not a bit, I ain't."

"But you haven't slept much!"

"Slep', sir? I ain't slep'. I only jest 'appened to close me eyes, sir. Ye see, I don't need much sleep, I don't. Four hours is enough for any man; my pal Nick says so, and Nick knows a precious lot, 'e do."

"Who is Nick?"

"Nick's a cobbler, sir. We're pals, we are, and I often drop in at Giles' Rents to smoke a pipe wiv 'im."

"Down by the river?" enquired Barnabas.

"Yessir. And now, shall I horder the post-boy to stop?"

"What for?"

"Well, the stables is near by, sir, and I thought as you might like to take a glimp' at the 'osses — jest to make your mind easy, sir."

"Oh, very well!" said Barnabas.

Therefore, having paid and dismissed the chaise, they turned into a certain narrow bye-street. It was very dark as yet, although in the east was a faint grey streak. On they went, side by side, between houses of gloom and silence; and thus, in a while, came to another narrow street, or rather blind alley, at the foot of which were the stables.

"Hush, sir!" said the boy, staring away to where the stable buildings loomed up before them, shadowy and indistinct in the dawn. Barnabas saw that he was creeping forward on tiptoe; and, though scarce knowing why, he himself did the same. They found the great swing doors fast, bolted from within, and not a sound reached them. Then Barnabas laughed suddenly, and clapped Master Milo upon his small, rigid shoulder.

"There, Imp, you see, it's all right!" said he — and then paused and held his breath.

"Did ye hear anythink?" whispered the boy.

"A chain — rattled, I think."

"And 'twas in the Terror's stall. There! didn't ye hear somethink else, sir?"

"No!"

"I did; it sounded like —" The boy's voice trailed off suddenly, and upon the silence a low whistle sounded, then a thud, as of some one dropping from a height, quickly followed by another; and then two figures darted away, impalpable as ghosts in the dawn, but the alley was filled with the rush and patter of their flight. Instantly Barnabas turned in pursuit, then stopped and stood utterly still, his head turned, his eyes wide, glaring back towards the gloom of the stables. For in that moment, above the sudden harsh jangling of chains from within, above the pattering footsteps of the fugitives without, an appalling sound rose high and ever higher — shrill, unearthly, and full of horror and torment unspeakable. And now in its place was another sound — a sound dull and muffled, but continuous, and pierced all at once by the loud, hideous whinnying of a horse. Then Barnabas sprang back to the doors, beating upon them with his fists and calling wildly for some one to open. And, in a while, the doors swung back, revealing Martin, half dressed and with a lantern in his hand, while three or four grooms hovered, pale-faced, in the shadows behind.

"My horse!" said Barnabas, and snatched the lantern.

"The Terror!" cried Milo. "This way, sir!"

Coming to a shadowy corner, Barnabas unfastened and threw open the half-door; and there, rising from the gloom of the stall, was a fiendish black head with ears laid back, eyes rolling, and teeth laid bare — cruel teeth, whose gleaming white was hatefully splotched — strong teeth, in whose vicious grip something yet dangled.

"Why, what's he got there!" cried Martin suddenly; and then — "Oh, my God! sir, look yonder!" And, covering his eyes, he pointed towards a corner of the stall where the light of the lantern fell.

Twisted and contorted, something lay there; something hideously battered, and torn, and trampled; something that now lay so very quiet and still, but that had left dark splashes and stains on walls and flooring; something that yet clutched the knife which was to have hamstrung and ended the career of the Terror once and for all; something that had once been a man.

TO BE CONTINUED